GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE,

OR

THE COURT OF HENRY III.

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDENNE,

A Romance.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY,

METRICAL TALE;

WITH SOME POETICAL PIECES.

BY ANNE RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO," "ROMANCE OF THE FOREST," &c.

TO [redacted]

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNALS.

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OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE;

OR THE

COURT OF HENRY THE THIRD,

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDEN.

THE THIRD DAY.

HERE was a drawing of the inside of the great hall, with the King and Queen holding festival. In the back-ground was a sketch of what seemed to be a pageant acted there; and yet the spectators appeared to be looking on, with an interest too serious for so trifling a performance. In the margin, also, was drawn, the chapel before mentioned, with a marriage ceremony at the porch.



GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE.

THIRD DAY.

On the morrow, the Prior of Saint Mary's was with the King, before the esquire-barber had clipped his dread Highness's beard, or the rushes had been strewed on the chapel-floor for the bridal company, or even the ox-chine, the manchets and the pitchers of wine had been delivered out from the kuchane and the buttery-hatch, for the breakfasts of the King and Queen and their lords and ladies. He told his Highness, that no person of the name of Reginald de Fol-

ville was on the burial lists of the Priory; nor was there any inhabitant of that house, or of Kenilworth, yet discovered, who remembered that name, connected with the extraordinary circumstances that had been related. It was, however, notorious, that robberies had frequently been committed in the woods and chases of Kenilworth, where many close and dark thickets were the home of outlaws; and that no single person, and few small companies, could travel in safety through any part of the forest of Ardern. He remarked, that, if the merchant had suffered there the outrage he had alleged, it was extraordinary he should now venture to travel over the same ground without guide, or companion, to lessen his danger; for, it had appeared from himself, that he was travelling without either.

It was no less extraordinary, that, if the calamitous adventure, related by the

merchant, had occurred so near to Kenilworth, and so few years back, it should not be generally known and still remembered there. From all these circumstances, and particularly from that of the name of Reginald de Folville not being found in the cemetery-book of the Priory, and from the absence of every other memorial of such a person, save in the charge itself, the Prior scrupled not to insist, that the stranger, now in confinement, was an impostor, falsely calling himself a merchant; who, for his own private ends, sought the ruin and the life of Sir Gaston de Blondeville.

His Highness seemed well satisfied that it should be so; and, in his indignation against the accuser, declared, that his life should be forfeited, for the crime of having sought another's. He called for Sir Gaston; and, having acquainted him with the result of the Prior's inquiries, assured

him, that his honour should be cleared from suspicion, and his accuser openly condemned: and his Highness told him, that, since he would soon be unable to serve him as a knight of his household, such being batchelors only, as well as that all the world might have proof of his spotless honour, he would place him amongst the nobles of his land.

So saying, his Highness bade him to his intended bride, and to hail her Baroness of Blondeville; also to warn her to be ready for the appointed ceremony of her marriage, by then two hours were past: and forthwith his Highness departed the chamber.

The Earl, her father, when he heard of what had passed, in the presence of the King, and of the new dignity conferred on Sir Gaston, was well contented to receive the young Baron for his son; but the lady, her mother, whose tenderness, being more than her ambition, made her fearful

of contrary tidings, was not yet completely assured, that this would be a happy union for her child. The Lady Barbara herself, however, nothing doubting the worth of her suitor, loved him not the less for having been accused, nor the better for having been raised to new dignity; nevertheless, she took the distinction in good part, rejoicing, that it should thus appear he had not fallen in the esteem of his Highness, the King.

She was now in her bower, already attired for the bridal, attended by her six maidens, the daughters of some of the first nobles of the realm. And, although this be not a gay history, chronicling the vanities of women, yet will we here report all that we heard of this lady, in so far as her appearance may tell what might be seen in the King's court, at this time. She wore on her hair a string of pearls of great value and a necklace of the same, given her by the young Baron. Her robe,

white as the lawn of the Archbishop, was confined by the precious girdle, given to her by the Queen; and over all she wore the veil of a sister, and pity it was, that so fair a vestal should be relinquished to this world, instead of being retained in the community, which had once looked to have her their own. But I say not now more of her appearance, at this time.

King Henry, during his visits to Kenilworth, had newly repaired and adorned the chapel of the castle, and there the marriage was to be solemnized. By his command, the walls had been painted with the story of King Edward, the Confessor, giving the ring off his finger to a poor stranger. The floor was strewed with rushes and oak leaves, and with such sweet flowers as the season afforded, from the woods and the gardens. The lights were all a-blaze, so that they overcame the perpetual tomb lights of Geoffrey de Clin-

ton, the founder of the castle, interred in the chapel here.

When the trumpets had sounded, there went forth in procession, first, the Queen and her court, her ladies pacing before her, two and two, according to their rank, preceded by her minstrels and the officers of her household. Next before her Highness went the bride, her six maidens strewing flowers before her, and Maria, the famous French poetess, who was then at the Queen's court, playing on her harp. Amongst the ladies encompassing her Highness, were the Countesses of Cornwall and Pembroke, (the latter then become Countess of Montfort) and the lady mother of the bride.

When these nobles and gentils had been met at the gates of the precinct of the priory, by a part of the choir, and by two of the secular clergy, and had been led to

the porch of the chapel, they were more fully received beneath it by others of the clergy, repeating what is appointed to be there said; and were led into the chapel by those, who had received them, and so were they placed, every one according to their rank, unless when the Queen made any especial choice. Then, the King's trumpets blew up, and his Highness approached, accompanied of Prince Edward and the Earl of Cornwall, and attended by the knights of his Highness's body, the knights of his household, and a countless train of nobles—the young Baron conspicuous among them all, for that graceful and gallant air, for which those of his nation were renowned. The cloud. that was over him yesterday, had passed, and his countenance was joyous as the day.

And next to this young lord in grace, and high above in dignity, was the Archbishop himself: of lofty stature and of

venerable and commanding aspect, he passed, with slow and stately steps, preceded by bishops and others of the church, his purple train borne up by two pages, and his own virger making due place for him and his part of the procession. Meanwhile, those of the clergy and of the choir, who had received the Queen, had returned to the precinct-gate, whence, with due sentences, uttered before the whole company, but 'specially before the bridegroom, they led him to the porch, where the banns were fully proclaimed.

I hold it not meet to speak here, with greater pourtrayment, of the more solemn ceremonies in the chapel itself, only that when the Archbishop came to the lowest step, he stayed there some time, with bended head in silence, the bishops having passed to their places; and then the minstrels and the children of the chapel began an anthem, which ended not till the Arch-

bishop, the King, the bride and bridegroom, had advanced to their proper places, and, the bride's veil having been thrown back, the Archbishop, on the special command of the King, began to read what is appointed.

There was that day in the chapel, among the crowd, by some unknown hap, a stranger, who seemed to observe, with more attention than the greater part, all that passed, yet did he never ask a question, nor speak to any one there. He was seen in different parts, although the press of people was so great, it was difficult for any one to change his station. At last, having reached the sepulchre of Geoffrey de Clinton, he leaned among the tomb-lights there and moved no more. There was in his countenance a touching solemnity, while he watched the progress of the ceremony, which was noticed by many present; for, in his whole demeanour there

was something, though it was difficult to explain what, that drew away the attention of many from the sight they came to witness, and that was pity, for it was such a sight as is seldom seen.

King Henry, of goodly stature and of comely countenance, was in a robe of dark blue velvet; and with the dignity of his carriage there was mixed an air of good humour, that made all men feel at ease in his presence. His son, Prince Edward, it was remarked, had a sterner look than had his father. Many, who knew, that the King's heart was good, in many respects, lamented his weaknesses, and that his passions too often carried him away. He now appeared in his state and well able to enjoy it; but the Archbishop, with his firm, composed, and solemn countenance and lofty figure, made all other dignity appear as nothing. He was like some oak of our forest, whose grey top has

braved the storms of centuries, and whose mighty branches still afford shelter to the storm-beset traveller, and to the plants and flowers at his feet. The Lady Barbara was the lily there; the Baron de Blondeville, a young beech, growing at hand, with all its glossy branches and light foliage, spreading forth in graceful beauty. 'What pity, if the lightning should sere those green leaves, and destroy its promise!

When the Archbishop asked, who gave away the maiden, his Highness advancing, graciously delivered her to the Baron, who bending one knee, received her of the King; but, as he rose up, his countenance showed not joy, or love—it showed consternation. His eyes had glanced on the tomb of Geoffrey de Clinton, and were now rivetted, where the stranger stood. The stranger, as he still leaned amidst the torches there, seemed, however, unmoved

by the dismayed looks of the bridegroom; his gloomy sternness was unshaken. But the emotion of the Baron increased: his looks became deadly pale, and he could no longer repeat the words, that were necessary in the ceremony. All eyes were soon directed upon him, and then upon the Lady Barbara, who fell into a swoon, and would have sunk on the ground, had not the King's arm sustained her. Her maidens, and some of the Queen's ladies hastened to her assistance; but, though almost every one in the chapel looked upon her with pity and care, the Baron regarded her not, nor seemed to know what had happened to her. His attention was still fixed upon the tomb, whither, too, directed by his looks, all other eyes now turned; but they perceived only the extended marble image of the dead one within, and the torches burning round it. The stranger was no longer there. The

hasty surprise of the King, the calm displeasure of the archbishop, the severe curiosity of the young Prince Edward, the distress of the lady mother; and the wonder of all, where this might end, may not be told."

His Highness, inquiring of those about him whence this confusion had arisen, was answered, there was a stranger in the chapel, who seemed to be known only to the Baron, and it was surely the sight of him, which had occasioned this disorder. Then, the King commanded, that the doors should be shut, and search made for this unknown person, whom he suspected to be some secret colleague of the young Baron's accuser, come hither purposely to interrupt the ceremony; and he commanded also, that the service should proceed, as soon as the parties affected should recover their presence of mind. Many there thought the King too hasty in this,

and the Archbishop himself testified no willingness to proceed.

The Baron did not long remain in his apparent torpor, but, on his recovery, he seemed like one awakened from a dream: he looked round with fear and surprise; and, fixing his eyes again on the tomb, he was well nigh relapsing, though nothing there was seen, save the marble image and the torch-lights around it. The King spoke graciously to him, and, when the baron heard his voice, he made most humble gesture before his Highness, and craved his pardon for the disturbance he had created.

"You must ask pardon of this lady," said the King, showing to him the bride, who was now nearly reviving; "for it is she only who has suffered."

Then, the young Baron seemed, for the first time, to know fully what had happened, and he hung over her with sadness

and anxiety; yet divers of the courtiers thought he felt more for himself than for her, and of this number were those, who envied him the new honour he had attained.

When the bride had recovered, her lady-mother would have withdrawn her from the chapel, and she herself wished to go away from the great observance that had been drawn towards her; but the Baron, addressing himself to the King, besought his Highness to interfere on his behalf, and not to suffer, that the vain impulse of a momentary and wandering feeling, which had, at times, come over him even from his childhood, should be taken in so serious a part. The Baron having knelt to the King, as he said this (and once before he did the same, but I did not note it on these leaves) the Archbishop could ill conceal his just displeasure, that the Baron should do re-

verence in that place to any human being; and the King said the Archbishop was right; and, making the Baron instantly rise, asked what had caused his dismay, and whom he had seen, that should have caused it.

Then the Baron answered, that he had seen one like unto his dead father; but he now knew it to have been only an apparition, suggested in his own mind; and he repeated, that to such like delusions he had been subject from his young-hood.

This was not said so lowly, as that the lady Huntingdon heard it not; and she thought, that such a state of mind was a sufficient reason for withholding her daughter from the marriage: and the Earl, her father, taking up the objection, had begun to repeat it,—but he was soon silenced; for his Highness said, peremptorily, that, because of consent duly given, he had resolved to be present at the marriage, with

his court; and it were not to be allowed, that a momentary infirmity of one of the parties, who instantly afterwards desired to have the ceremony renewed, should be sufficient for rendering all the preparations, which had been so great and so public, bootless. And his Highness commanded progress forthwith.

Yet the Archbishop had some private discourse with the King; and it seemed as though he were recommending delay, at least till that stranger had been questioned, whose appearance, he privately believed, had thus disturbed the Baron de Blondeville, notwithstanding the tale he had told. The lady Barbara herself was questioned, as to the cause of the distress she had betrayed; but she answered only, that it was the sudden alteration in the Baron, that caused her spirits to fail.

When those, who had been ordered to search the chapel, were called upon, they

declared, that no where could they find the stranger who had been seen, neither within the doors, nor in court, nor in chamber. Then, the King, without further delay, commanded, that the service should proceed; and it did proceed accordingly, and was concluded, without farther let, or hinderance.

So the King and Queen returned from the chapel to the great chamber, in due state and order, and the court dispersed for that day, until the evening, when there was to be a grand banquet, to honour these nuptials.

All that day, the young Baroness seemed grave and thoughtful; the lady, her mother, was not a whit more joyed; although the Earl, recollecting the honour the King had newly conferred on the bridegroom, and beholding, in his mind, other benefits likely to follow, seemed now again to be well contented with this marriage. But the Baron carried himself thoughtfully, for one

in his circumstances; and some, who observed him closely, thought there was still a tale to be told, which he liked not to have known; and others, who envied him less his new title, held that this humour was but the remains of that, which had seized upon him in the chapel, and that it was the recollection of this and of the confusion he had there occasioned, which preyed upon his spirits. However this might be, he seemed desirous of shaking off that mood, and to appear at the banquet with the gaiety, which the time invited.

Surely the preparations for this feast were magnificent, though they came not nigh what had been made on some former marriages, such as that given at Westminster, when Richard, the King's brother, wedded Cincia, daughter of the Count de Provence, and sister to the Queen, when three thousand dishes were served up

at the wedding dinner; nor is it to be thought this was like unto that one afterwards at York, when King Henry gave his daughter Margaret in marriage to Alexander, the young King of Scotland; and my Lord Archbishop gave, for his share of the feast, sixty pasture oxen, which were clean consumed at that entertainment; but, nevertheless, this at Kenilworth was a right noble and princely banquet; and thus it was.

The King, that night, with the Queen, kept state in the great hall, which was thereunto, by command of his Highness, hanged about with that suit of tapestry, which setteth forth the story of our famous King Richard, Cœur de Lion, his deeds, in Palestine; and be it remembered, that King Henry loved nothing better than to see on his walls the noble achievements of his ancestors and others, as the Queen's chamber here at Kenilworth showeth, where he

had caused to be pictured forth, Merlin, King of Britain, and his three sons; the sailing of William from Normandy; the submission of Griffin ap Conan to Henry the First, and several other things.

This tapestry in the great hall was placed on all sides under the windows, down to the floor, except at the bottom of the hall, where the great gallery ran; and there the carved screens beneath were sufficient to hide the buttery-hatch, on the other side of the passage, and the doors leading down to the kuchanes. It hung on all sides, save here, and where the great chimney stood, which was guarded by a projecting stone-work, of curious carving, and like unto a canopy, or open porch. The wood, that was consumed within, was laid this night on andirons of solid silver, bossed.

On the top of this seeming porch, stood figures of armed knights, as large as life,

such as were in the gallery before-mentioned. That gallery was covered with weapons and with complete suits of armour; some, with helmet and feet fastened against the wall, and others, standing upright, like to living warriors, armed at all points; but doubtless, these last were well held up by some artful contrivance. Five figures, thus appointed, stood in the front of the gallery, as if watching who should enter from the screens beneath. Amongst these was one shape of black steel, larger than the rest and higher by the head; said to have been the very harness worn by the King's great uncle, Richard the Lion, in some battle in Palestine: and the very sight of it was enough to daunt with fear those unused to a field of war.

Certes, it was like to that worn by this king in the very tapestry, wherewith the hall was this night, in good part, adorned; and where he was shown fighting

in all his glory. It has been said, the young prince was much moved at the sight of the daring deeds there pictured forth, and of that armour—but not with terror, rather with noble pride, to emulate such greatness; and that he was by this and such like things, often before his eyes, prompted to what he afterwards achieved; but of this I cannot say. The keys of this gallery of arms were kept in the care of the lord constable of the castle, so that no person might enter it, without his special leave.

In the back wall was a window, opening from the King's chamber, that looked over the gallery into the hall below; and where his Highness used sometimes to divert himself, with observing what was passing at the different tables there and with the games and sports, passing amongst his household and followers. He needed only to draw aside a curtain in that chamber, to see all that was doing in the hall be-

low; and there, at even-tide, he might remain unseen, if it so pleased him; for the gallery received light only from the lamps in the arches high above.

Not the minstrel's gallery was this; never was it so at Kenilworth; nor in any great hall of prince or peer where state was duly kept. Their gallery was on the left, opposite to the great chimney, and nearer to the dais, where they sat all joyfully clothed in the King's livery.

At the upper end of the hall, raised by several steps above the rest of the flooring, was that dais, where stood the high tables. The King was under a canopy of crimson velvet, fringed about with gold; the Queen's was on the same platform, and with a canopy of the like form and stuff; but the canopy was lower by the valance.

A carpet of crimson silk was spread under the tables, and down the steps of the dais; below this, the floor of the

hall was strewed with fresh rushes, on which were laid wood-flowers in plenty. In the bay-windows, at the end of the platform, or dais, a princely cupboard was set forth, stage above stage, of nine or ten heights, till they reached the bottom of the glass casements there; piled up with gold and silver cups and dishes and with basins of solid gold, some set with precious stones, and others highly wrought.

From the arched roof of these two bays hung lamps, that showed all their brightness, and illuminated the roial window above, and also the slender columns, that reached to the roof; and the curious fret-work of leaves and flowers spreading there; which had been newly done by command of King Henry, who loved such vanities, and had brought this new fashion out of Normandy. He had put such roial windows, perchance better painted, in his new church at Salisbury.

Those, who now beheld the pomp he displayed and his vast retinue, wherever he kept his court, might say, with the venerable monk of St. Albans, on occasion of the marriage of the Scottish King Alexander with this King, Henry's daughter; "If I were to describe the grandeur of this festival, the number of the noble guests, the splendor and various changes of their dresses, the abundance of the tables and the variety of the sports provided; those, who were absent, would think I was inventing." There, Matthew, the good monk, tells us yet more of the Archbishop of York on that occasion, who expended four thousand marks in entertaining the courts of both kings and in every kind of munificence to the poor and sick. The two kings, Matthew further tells us, entertained by turns their whole courts, "so that," as he adds, "the theatrical vanity of this world might show to all, as much

as it could of its short and transitory gladness." And vanity it was, as those of Saint Albans knew to their cost and sorely complained of, when the King went so often to the Abbey there.

But what would such have said, had they lived now, in our King Richard's days; who, the second of his name, is first in every kind of new extravagance, the like of which was never seen afore, and what it may end in, there is no one that dare yet say.

But now, to go back to the past King Henry; he proved himself, according to the account in the Norman tongue, which I have seen, not only an excellent "meat-giver" here at Kenilworth, but a sumptuous bestower of many pleasures and a patron of every kind of mimickry, such as painting, carving, music and versifying, as this hall at Kenilworth fully displayed, on this very night. Before the feast began,

it was a goodly sight to behold the serjeants at arms and the ushers, bearing the piles of gold and silver cups and the spice-plates to the boards; and the ceremony of laying forth the sur-nap on the King's table, in readiness for him to wash, which was thus:—

The King's sewer having laid the end of the sur-nap and a towel on the board, and the usher having fastened his wand to them, drew them to the other end of the table; and then kneeling down, the sewer at the other end kneeling likewise, they stretched the sur-nap smooth. Then the usher, laying up the end of the towel on the board, rose and did reverence before the King's chair, with his wand, as though his Highness had already been there. And, when he had kneeled down and amended the towel, he did reverence again in like manner.

On either side of the hall, reaching from

the steps of the dais (for in this hall was only one dais) to the screens at the end, were ranges of tables, appointed for different ranks and degrees of the Court: and it were goodly to see these nobles and gentils ranged in their places by the marshal of the hall. At one table, on the right, next below the dais, were those of the King's blood, who sat not at his board. Opposite, on the other line, sat the noble dames, all together.

Next below the King's board, sat the bishops and the abbots, each at their own table; then, the King's high officers of estate, such as attended not on his person; there were, besides, the four Barons of the Exchequer, assessors, and several other great servants of his courts of justice, which always followed him, wherever he might choose to keep the high festivals of the year, and to administer the laws of the realm.

Other tables were set apart for other ranks of nobles, not of blood; their

wives and daughters sitting apart from them. Thus every table was filled, each with its respective rank, magnificently attired; the nobles in velvet and cloth of gold, the dames sparkling with jewels and bearing plumes on their hair; the bishops in their 'broidered copes and golden mitres, and the great officers of state in their own peculiar habits, with their golden chains.

But the table of the knights-banneret was that which made all, save the ladies' boards, look pale and dull. They wore their 'broidered mantles over a kind of light cuirass, each with a sash of crimson beneath, thrown over the shoulder and falling down to the sword. On their heads they had each a small cap of velvet, with a gallant plume of feathers depending on each side, which it was the King's pleasure they should wear, even in his presence. On the wall above, were the shield and helmet of each knight, their banners

waving over them. At the bottom of the hall was the esquires' table, were sat nineteen of them, arrayed in the King's livery. Every table had its own officers of service, as marshal-sewer, conveyers, almoner and butler, appointed according to the rank of the guests.

Now, the trumpets without having given warning, the King and Queen entered by a door leading from the state-chambers; attended by the young Prince Edward, the Archbishop, the Earl and Countess of Cornwall, the Lady Pembroke and Montfort, the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, the bride and bridegroom, all the knights of the household then at the court, arrayed in their velvet gowns, the esquires of the body; the kings at arms, heralds and pursuivants, going before in their coats,—two serjeants at arms appearing to make way. Next before the King,

went the lord marshal of the hall and his eight knights.

Thus, their Highnesses came in, with a brave noise of trumpets, and took their seats at the high tables. And immediately entered from the door, forty yeomen, each bearing a torch, who took their stations down the middle of the hall, between the tables, in two lines. Ten esquires of the household, most richly bedight in the King's livery, who had marched before his Highness, with the four esquires of the body, stood in a half-circle; each bearing a large wax-light, at the back of the dais, near the high tables:—while other ten, with lights, took their stations, in two divisions, at the foot of the steps of the dais; but leaving an open space, that all the guests might have sight of the princely board.

There, clusters of lights in golden

candlesticks, showed the massive plate and the marvellous devices of the banquet, with the magnificent attire of those who graced it; and these lights, together with the numerous torches below, and the lamps depending from the points of every inverted pinnacle of the roof on high, cast such a blaze of splendour, not only on the banquet beneath, but on every painted window above, as made the hall as grand a spectacle, well nigh, for those without, as for those within; only that the guests could not be seen, by reason that the windows were so high above them.

Some travellers that night, coming from afar, through the woods, espying the blaze, wondered what it might mean. And some poor pilgrims, travelling from the shrine of Saint Hugh, at Lincoln, seeing through the darkness such painted light afar off in the valley, took it for some delusion, raised by evil wizards for their

destruction; and they ventured not forward, till they had, after due observation, some assurance of the mortal reality. Presently, as they advanced, they distinguished better the gorgeous colouring of the windows, which they knew to be of the new manner, called roial, and then the towers, above, though these were pale in the moonlight, and then they heard the revel sound of minstrelsy within; and so, coming to the priory-gate, they asked shelter and had it: for, though they were told, that the King kept his court, and, at that time, banqueted in the castle, they chose to take refuge in the quiet of our cloister, rather than to ask for any part, or sight, of such doings. But, to come back to the King's feast, of which much and marvellous is yet to be told.

At the King's table sat, on his right hand, the Archbishop of York; beyond him sat the young Prince Edward; and,

on the left, the Earl of Cornwall. But, just before his Highness came to his place and sat, the Archbishop, as highest of estate, delivered unto him the napkin; and the young Baron, for his honour, was allowed, on that night, to bear the golden basin and ewer for the King to wash; although there were so many of higher estate in the hall. At the same time, was brought another golden basin to the Archbishop, who seemed to wait till the King should have washed: but his Highness made a beck, that he should wash; and he did so. When the King washed, straight five esquires gathered round him, and stood with their lights, till he had made an end.

This ceremony done, they withdrew to their places, and the Baron took his behind the King's chair, who spoke merrily to him, while he served; and the Baron had recovered his good looks, and wore his gown

of azure, broidered with silver, with as good a grace as any one in court. He was, most certain, of a brave figure, and of countenance, that, for high spirit, seemed to challenge comparison with every man he looked upon, which made him many secret enemies.

At the Queen's board, sat the Countesses of Cornwall and Montfort, and the young Baroness de Blondeville, and none other. A golden ewer, set thick with rubies, stood beside her Highness; and a basin of the same, with damask-water, strewed with fresh pulled lavender, was held to her to wash by one of her maidens, who duly sat at her feet under the board, the young Baroness bearing the napkin. Which done, two of her Highness's maidens, who waited behind her chair, delivered them to the Queen's pages.

And now entered the hall, Norroy, King of arms, heralds and poursuivants attend-

ing, all in their coats; the lord marshal, with his eight knights, and the steward, treasurer, and comptroller, walking before the first dish for the King's board; which was carried by the King's chief sewer, wearing his neck towel; his carver, Harpingham, wearing the same, surrounded by esquires, of the household bearing wax-lights, and followed by serjeants at arms and esquires and pages. But, when these had reached the middle of the hall, they all stood still, and made reverence to the King; the lord steward, with his wand; the carver with his great knife, and the sewer, with his dish in his hand: and again, at the foot of the dais, they all stopped short, and bowed before him, the trumpets sounding the while.

Would you know what this first dish was? It was a warner of shields of boar, in armour, with mustard, served with malmsey. When the warner was ended,

the first course, and so was every other, was brought up by seven sewers, with like state and with due taking of assaye of the King's meat, and with divers other ceremonies too tedious to relate.

Only amongst the dishes were, frumentie, with venison; frumentie roial, with a dragon for a suttletie; browst of Almayne, potage of gourdis, and felettes in galentine.

At the Queen's, table, amongst many other dishes and suttleties of curious invention, were these—tench in jelly; great custard planted for a suttletie; petynel, peronsew with his segue; goos in hochepot and browet tuskay,

There was, also, for an honour to the young Baroness, a special suttletie, presenting the Queen's bower, with her ladies ranged round, and the lady Barbara, receiving on her knee the jewels, which her Highness had given to her the night before; there too, was presented Pierre, the

minstrel, playing on his very harp. The Baron de Blondeville had leave from the King to quit his chair, for a time, to visit the bride; and, when he shewed this subtletie to her, she smiled; but it was the first time she had smiled this night.

There was another subtletie of archers in the forest hunting the hart, with foresters in green blowing their horns and the whole court following. In this, too, was the Lady Barbara, mounted on a milk-white palfry, her hair bound up in a beauteous net; but not of gold and pearls, as it was this night, nor wore she a mantle of white cloth like that she now had on. At a distance, within the shadow of the trees, stood an aged man alone, wringing his hands; but what this might mean none knew.

In the hall below, every table was abundantly served with dainties, according to the rank of those who sat there; and all were contented, as well they might be.

The King talked graciously and often, to the Baron de Blondeville, and sometimes would send him with a dish of dainties from his own board to the Baroness; nothing doubting, that he would like the errand. And, when the Earl of Norfolk brought his Highness his cup, he drank to her; but the trumpets blew up too soon, so that what he said was heard not; but he bowed, and thrice waved to her his hand, the which, soon as the young Baroness saw, she rose up and curtsied low three times, to the great pleasure of all, who beheld her sweet grace and modesty. Many there were in the hall, who cried out, "May she be happy!"

The King had given back the cup into the hands of the Lord Norfolk, and was resting him in his chair; when he saw the curtain drawn back of that window, which opened from his own chamber upon the gallery of arms, and a person standing

there. While his Highness marvelled by what means any one could have admittance into that chamber, the keys being in the custody of the Lord Constable, the window was unfolded, and the person, advancing into the gallery, came forward to the front; and there stood still, and with great seeming confidence, beside the armour of Richard the Lion.

Although the light, that fell there from the roof, was not so strong that his Highness, at such distance, could distinguish the countenance of this person, yet, by the grey gleam reflected there, he seemed to be clothed in steel, with helmet on his head: and so like was he to the form of King Richard, that, had not his Highness seen him advance, and the real shape of motionless armour standing by, he would have thought this but a figure for show, like the others there. The King, no less surprized by the strangeness of this appear-

ance, than displeased by the boldness which had thus openly defied his command, respecting that chamber, ordered an esquire to repair to the Lord Constable, who was himself in the hall; and learn whom he had admitted there. The Baron, who stood by, looking whither the King looked, on a sudden changed countenance; and his Highness again observed that stupor and dismay, which he had noticed in the morning, beginning to fix his eyes and to spread over every feature. The King spoke sharply to him, to rouse him, as was supposed, from his trance; but without effect, for he stood fixed and stiffened, like to a marble statue, yet with looks bent on the gallery, where the stranger stood.

Then, the King gave a beck that none should notice his condition; hoping he might recover himself, before the Queen and the young Baroness should observe

him. When the Archbishop perceived that person standing in the gallery, he was observed to make the holy sign; and, when he looked at the Baron and saw his amazement, he repeated it:—it was said his Highness asked him why he did so; but that he answered not, save by a look of solemn reverence and by bowing of the head. That stranger, though the King fixed his eyes on him with displeasure, moved not; but his Highness, though unable to distinguish his features in that obscure situation, thought the intruder likely to be one not obscure, if known, but one who expected to remain unknown in a place so far from what was now passing; and his Highness resolved, that he should not escape detection.

With the esquire messenger, came up the hall the constable of the castle, to attend the King's pleasure. His Highness turned to chide him for not having better

observed his command, respecting his own chamber; and enquired who the stranger was, that had intruded there. With astonishment, the constable declared the keys of that chamber and gallery had not been out of his keeping, and that he had not admitted any one thither.

"Nay," said the King, "thine eyes may contradict thy tongue; look there, and thou wilt see one less willing to keep council against thee than thyself." The constable looked to the gallery, but, perceiving only the known figures of armour there, he stood silent and amazed. Then his Highness, seeing the stranger was gone, said, "I let this pass. Thy friend has seen thee, and profited by the warning. Be more heedful in future. Go now to thy place."

The constable did reverence, and departed, marvelling much at the King's words and well resolved to enquire fur-

ther into this matter. And now the Baron, not having been spoken to for some space, began to recover himself, like one awaking from sleep, and happily before those at the Queen's table knew what happened. The King made a sign, that none should speak, and then, accosting him with his wonted graciousness, bade him go to the table appointed for his rank, and refresh himself there. The young Prince Edward looked on him with curiosity, but without pity; and spoke not to him. Meanwhile, the Baron gazed around with strange visage, as if he knew not well where he was, but in a short space bowed to the King, and withdrew. While this passed, the Archbishop was noted to look often towards the Queen's table; but he said nought.

The constable, the while, was making busy enquiry, who had been in the gallery of arms, but no one knew any thing of the matter; so he went himself to examine

the doors, the key in his hand. The outer door, that led to the King's chamber, was fast. He unlocked it, and, leaving a guard there, went forward with lights through the whole range to the gallery chamber, and there examined the window door, that opened towards the hall; which also was fastened, as he had left it.

Much marvelling, he went out into the gallery, and tried a door, at the end, that opened upon a stair, and found it not only locked, but bolted within, so that if any one had entered this way, he could not have gone out by the same. The constable had ordered the outer-door to be guarded, as I said, while search was made through the gallery and the whole range of rooms; but this was to no purpose, not any thing living being found there. And now he began to think, that his Highness had tasted too often of the golden cup, and mistaken one of the armour-

shapes in front of the gallery for a living knight, or other warlike person. However, he took care to make the doors secure, and forthwith he departed.

And now, when the second course was on its way to the King's table, the steward entered the hall, and called out loudly three times, "Wassel! wassel! wassel!" and, incontinently, the cup-bearers went round to the different boards; and all of the Court, standing up and leaning towards the high table, drank the King's health. Then, the verger of the minstrels giving them the beck, they all at once set up their pipyngs and blowings, with such a brave noise, that the castle might have been taken by storm, before those in the hall could have heard the thump of a single war-wolf.

There were trumpets and clarions and citolles and tabarets and nakerers and fithols; besides the King's five harpers,

all beating, or blowing, or thrumming together. They were heard afar off in the woods; and many an outlaw lay on watch that night, for those, who might be travelling from the castle homewards. The brethren of the priory liked not the noise, and the Prior, I guess, would have liked it as little, but that he was amongst those in the hall, sitting at the table of the abbots. The poor prisoner in the tower heard the revelry, and to him it was sad indeed.

It were making a cook's book to tell what dainties there were at the second course: these must suffice, for this little history:—There were joly amber potage; jiggots of venison, stopped with cloves; lamprey, with galentine, marchpagne; fritter-dolphin; leche-florentine; with divers suttleties of castles and dragons and voyages at sea; and cities in the King's dominions, beyond the seas; and a full

tournament, showing knights on horseback, riding their rounds, and ladies freshly apparelled, in the galleries, looking at them. At the King's board, was a suttletie presenting his court of justice such as it was already prepared in this castle, against the feast of Saint Michael. There was his Highness, sitting in judgment, and all his great officers, sitting round on the benches.

At the Queen's table, was a suttletie with ballads, the which, as yet, I have not. It was of three stages: the first presented Sir Gaston, at some former time, mounted on a courser in a field of war, and this alluded to some valorous exploit performed in France; the second stage showed him kneeling before the King, who laid his sword on him, and rewarded him with knighthood; the third stage showed him in his Baron's robes, receiving from the King the hand of the

lady Barbara. There might you see every particular of the ceremony, as it had appeared that morning to the very life. There, too, was the tomb of Geoffry de Clinton; but the stranger, which had appeared there, was not mimicked.—While the Baroness looked upon this, with most serious countenance, suddenly she fetched a deep sigh, and fell from her seat like one dead. The Queen's maids and the bride's maids thronged about her, but none could tell the cause of this her sudden discomfiture. Though some readily guessed it was a recollection of what had happened to the Baron, that morn; others in the hall affirmed, that they had just heard a voice speak these words: "Three tokens of death!"

But the lady Barbara herself, when she recovered, feigned her swooning was from the heat of the hall and the noise of the music; and, in trowth, this last

was enough to make a stronger one than her to faint; and how the Prior sat it, who used always to cry out upon loud doings at feasts, was the wonder of many: but, that night, he seemed as joyously given as any there; yet held he himself with all proper ceremony, and remained always at the abbot's board, saying little, unless to those near to him. The lady Baroness, at the Queen's command, was led forth awhile for fresher air.

There entered the hall, about this time, a jongleur, or glee-man, with harp in hand, clad in a cloak of grey, and took his seat at the lower end. His sandals were stained with marks of many a mile's travel; and he sat awhile wearied and breathless. Those, who saw him, supposed that he had been to Warwick Castle, there to exercise his art, as so many others of his craft did; that, having heard the lord of that domain was here, keeping festival

at Kenilworth, and knowing a jongleur to be always welcome at such seasons, he had posted hither, with all speed, not waiting even to amend his guise. Yet, marvelled they how he had gained admittance, in plight so ill becoming a King's presence; but there was that in his look and stature, that agreed as little with his apparelling, as that did with the King's high presence; and which checked the questions they would have put to him. A page, seeing his weary look, offered him wine and meat; but he, with gesture that spoke as much as words, refused the gift, but accepted the good will.

And now, the second course and a third being ended, came the heralds into the hall; and, with loud proclaimings, called out, three times, "Largesse for the King, the Queen, the Earl of Cornwall, and the Baron de Blondeville!" shaking, the while, their great cup on high. And

first they cried it before the King, at the foot of the dais, next in the middle of the hall, and last at the lower end. And, in their officious zeal to exalt those, who yielded most to them, they made the Earl of Cornwall King of the Romans; but this was yet to be, which well they wot, also how wishful their lord, King Henry, was to gain this dignity for his brother, and how much he had employed his power and treasure therefore.

The King, as he heard that title given, fixed an eye of correction on him, that spoke it; yet was he not displeased with him in his heart, and he sent one to command, that he should again cry "Largesse" for the Earl, and so remedy the mistake, which was straight done accordingly.

And now the minstrels came down from their gallery, and sat altogether, at the board's end, at the bottom of the hall, eating of the feast and partaking of the

largesse-cup; there to remain, till the disguisings should enter. And it was a brave sight to see them all apparelled in the King's livery, guarded and laced with gold; their virger, more glorious than the rest, still directing all their doings. They eyed the stranger glee-man askance, and asked him not to their board, wondering why he came thither, where was no need of him, as they thought, and viewing his apparel with contempt and himself with disdain, as treading upon the skirts of their greatness, he being no better than a wandering minstrel. He seemed to read their thoughts, and his proud looks did somewhat daunt them; yet did his ruffled spirit take refuge with his harp and gain strength from it; for, he soon struck forth sounds so strong and clear, as rung up to the arched roof, and filled all the hall with sudden wonder. Maister Pierre himself could not exceed him in force and spirit,

and amongst the whole five of the King's harpers was not one, who might not have bowed before him. Soon, the hum of busy tongues, that had often filled the hall with noise as of the murmuring tides, so that the whole band of minstrels might hardly at times be heard, (yet seemed not one tongue louder than another)—soon that hum was husht and still,—and the sound of that harp alone rose up out of the silence, and spread its sweetness over all the air. Every face was turned, with deep attention, one way, in search of the minstrel, and every head was hung aside.

Observing this, he quickly changed his measure to one more wild and abrupt, and his eyes seemed to send forth sparks of fire, while he sang, with full and clear voice, parts of the famous lay of Richard Cœur de Lion, as

"Him followed many an English knight,"

and other lines. Prince Edward, the while,

seemed to lose not a word he sung. When he came to the words,

> "By the blood upon the grass
> Men might see where Richard was,"

the glee-man could not end them before the Prince, forgetting where he was, and, with fiery eyes, as if inspirited by them, stood like a conqueror on his field. The glee-man proceeded.

> "As snow ligges on the mountains,
> Behelied* were hills and plains
> With hauberk bright and helm clear
> Of trompers and of tabourer;
> To hear the noise it was wonder:
> As though the earth above and under
> Should fallen; so fared the sound!"

When the harper had ended, the King asked who played; and, being told a wandering glee-man, drawn hither by the fame of the festival, his Highness ordered he should be taken care of and well supplied with banqueting.

* Covered.

And now, supper being ended, damask-water was brought for the King and Queen and the Archbishop to wash with. After, the esquires of the household taking the royal boards, with all their suttleties, and the yeomen making off with those below in the hall, the place was cleared for dancing and disguisings. Then the Bishops, though not my Lord of York, nor yet the Bishop confessor attendant on the King, held it time to depart; the abbots also; and, with due homage to his Highness, forthwith avoided; but not the Prior; he remained in the hall.

It was then, that the King's Highness sent his presents to the bride's-groom; being a rich cup-board of plate, the chief wonder whereof was a great cup of solid gold, standing on an eagle's foot. On the cover rose the head of a bird, whose eyes were of emeralds, and with his stooping beak he held the ring, which was set with rubies, as though by pulling the

ring he would lift up the lid; his wings, half-folded, formed the two handles. Great store was set by the King upon the workmanship of this cup, he having himself ordered the device of the eagle, and, as some said, to show thereby how he would encourage the aspirings of the young Baron. Besides this, were six spice-plates and six great bowls of silver chased and two basins and ewers of the same. There were also six great silver pots for wine, with vine leaves set with emeralds twining round them, the grapes being of purple amethyst so cunningly enwrought, you would have thought you could pluck them. Many other things there were of this cup-board, too tedious to relate.

To the young Baroness, who was recovered, and had now returned to the hall, the Queen sent a set of golden baskets for sweetmeats and perfumes, wrought, as was said, by a Frenchman, and of so

seemly a fashion, the like had never been seen before, but which made some to murmur, that her Highness liked only the workmanship of her own country. For this, the Baroness, led by her lord, advanced nearer to the Queen, and thanked her, with most sweet thanks; and then he his-self paid homage to the King for his princely gift, as doubtless he should have done before, but, perchance, his bride detained him to uphold her in thanking the Queen, before so great a company. Having done this, he took his station by the chair, his Highness often turning to him, with merry speech, to drive away the gloom, that yet, at whiles, hung upon his brow.

Presently, the tuning of many instruments without the hall was heard, and the sound of the bugle drawing nigh and nigher, till suddenly the skreens were drawn away, and there entered, at the bottom of the hall, a mountain moving on

unseen wheels, piled up with green trees of every shade, which rose to a height of forty feet, or more, and spread itself on every side. On the steeps of this mountain, stags—for so they seemed—were bounding from rock to rock, and foresters in green, with their dogs, were hunting them to the sound of bugles, concealed amongst the woods.

These were all lords and men of honour, in goodly disguisings, so that you would have taken them for foresters and bucks, as they climbed up and down certain steps of this mountain, at the risk of their necks, and all for sport, and to please the King's Highness by their agility. And a pleasureful sight, ywis, it was to see them all running together, lords and knights and hounds and men of honour, as who should be first in his Highness's favour. All acquitted themselves to the very top of excellence; for, they had been

well taught in the knowledge of hunting, which is now called "the mysterie of the forests."

Amongst them was Sir William de Mowbray, who, being somewhat of the fattest, was often fain to stop, and blowed so hard, that, had but a hunter's horn been clapped to his mouth, it would have tuned up as high as the best of them. There was also the young Lord de Lomene, a foreign-man, as light as the flame of a waxen morter, and he, stepping falsely, rolled down the side of the mountain from stair to stair, till he settled on the floor of the hall, never the worse for his forced performance, where he was received with a chorus of laughter and plaudits from the whole Court.

But anon the sound of the other instruments was heard, and another pageant entered. This was a goodly disguising of ladies, to the number of twelve, all freshly apparelled in silks of Italy, and shut up in

a lantern. Around this lantern were windows covered with lawn; and within, amongst these ladies and women of honour, were forty wax lights, so that they might be seen and known, through all their disguisings, by every one in the court. Thus, these ladies of the lantern came on sweetly singing, like unto a cage full of birds, and playing on lutes and dulcymers, claricords, claricimballs and such-like instruments, with so pleasing noise, the like to it was never before heard, till they reached the upper end of the hall. There, ere they grounded, they were turned round, before the King and Queen, that all the goodly machine might be beholden.

Then, the rehersed, disguised Lords and men of honour, descending from their mountain (the lantern standing aside), danced awhile together by themselves deliberately and seemlyly, playing, all the time, upon the recorders and regalls and tabors,

in harmony with the music in the lantern, which might be called "light of love"; and, at certain times, tuning up, with most brave noise, and singing "Hayle, comely King, the cause of all our mirth!" And, presently, these ladies and women of honour, making a beck, that they wished to be let out of their lantern, the lords and men of honour hastened to open the door and to let them out, and help them down, and then they all fell deliberately to dancing, and gravely disporting together, in a most seemly sort, full curiously, and with most wonderful countenance. The while, the mountain and the lantern vanished together out of the hall.

When this pleasant company of estates and gentils had ended their sports, and had dispersed to their seats round the hall, there was a ceasing of the minstrels; and, forthwith the voide entered, with the he-

ralds blowing up before it. Then came two score and more of lords and knights and men of honour, some bearing golden spice-plates, others bowls of silver gilt, others golden cups; followed by esquires and pages, bearing great silver pots of wine, to fill up the rehersed cups, as often as they were empty.

And now the King stood up, and spoke right cheerly to divers about him, who had not approached him before, and, amongst others, to the Prior of St. Mary's, he being still in the hall, although it was past midnight, and those of his house were rising to keep the first watch of matin. His Highness was yet speaking to him, when my Lord Archbishop, who stood deliberately on the King's right hand, was seen to make the holy sign. Those, who observed this, marvelled, and the King, gravely accosting him, asked why, twice

this night, he had made this sign. But the Archbishop, as before, answered not, save by a look of awe and reverence.

The King, turning his eyes, saw, standing firmly at the foot of the dais, one, whom he took to be the same person he had already seen, this night, in the gallery of arms; and this, he judged, not by his face, for his Highness had not then distinguished it, nor could he now fully see it, shaded, as it was, by his visor; but by his singular figure, arrayed in complete armour. It seemed, however, as if his melancholy eyes were fixed upon the King. He stood motionless, and spoke not to any near him, nor did those near seem to regard him. For a moment, his Highness's attention was rivetted on the object before him. He then sent an esquire to learn who it was, that had come thus unusually accoutred for a festive hall; but ere the

messenger had left the King, the stranger had disappeared in the crowd.

And now, while the King and the Archbishop seemed severally to be pondering their thoughts, a solemn air of music was heard, without the hall, and the approach of another pageant withdrew his Highness's attention, who enquired why this had not appeared before the voide, but finished by supposing, that it was some mysterie of the men of Coventry intended to surprise him. He, therefore, graciously took to his chair again, listening to the sad and sweet harmony that advanced, while he ruminated on the late extraordinary occurrences; for, indeed, the quiet mournfulness of these sounds promoted the musing of melancholy thoughts.

At last, the pageant entered, and there appeared in the hall the presentation of a sea-shore, with high white cliffs, so cun-

ningly mimicked, that it was the marvel of all, who beheld. There seemed the very waves, flushed with the setting sun and bickering in the light, as also breaking with gentle noise upon the strand; and a ship riding at anchor near, with a little boat lying on the beach, as if waiting to carry some one away. Now, the absence of certain evil sprites from this pageant, would have been enough to convince his Highness, that this was no mysteric of the men of Coventry, without the beautiful deception of the scene here played forth, —and he marvelled.

Then there came in, the music playing sadly, a knight and a lady, with two little children following. The knight took them up tenderly, and pointed to the ship, and kissed them. The while, the lady wept sorely, and hung upon the knight, who tried to comfort her, and, pointing to the ensign on his shield, which showed that he

was prepared for the Holy Land, he knelt down, and raised his hands on high. She knelt beside him, and then the babes, lifting up their little hands, knelt too; the music, the while, playing solemnly and sweet. Then they rose up, and the knight again kissed the children, and held the lady to his heart. After which, mariners came in, and, launching the boat, the knight departed for the ship. But the lady stood weeping on that sea-shore, and motioning with her hand, till he reached the vessel, and it sailed away.

But still she stood, while it vanished in that gloomsome mist, which now seemed to rise from the ocean, and to stain all that glorious west, where late the day had been. Then, seeing the bark no more, she turned away, and wept piteously, leading her little babes, and so she departed!

Then the sea-shore was gone all at once out of the hall, and the music changing

to warlike strains of trump and clarion, straight there appeared, as if by very magic itself, a field of battle, with knights and banners, on one side bearing the holy sign. Nor was there wanting St. George for England, the English lion, with many other true-hearted ensigns. On the other hand, were shown Saracens, with their crescents, glittering, as if the sun shone on them. At a distance, on the slopes of the hills, lay tents, with palms and cedars overtopping them. Nearer, on the low sea-bank, was a city of Palestine, with walls and mighty gates and domes and pinnacles. Within that sea-bay, too, ships rode at anchor. The tide was bright as amber, save where a sultry mist seemed to sit on the horizon, as if brooding a coming storm. Nay, such was the cunning of the scene, that you might sometimes think you heard that muttering thunder, which

growls by fits so sullenly from far, before a tempest.

The King could not but marvel; and seeing this pageant was so different from those mysteries he had beheld played heretofore by the men of Coventry, and from any pageant he had yet seen enacted by English joculator, he asked what jongleur from the east now played forth his art; for the like of deception and device he had never seen before. His Highness then bethought him it might be that stranger glee-man, who had, this night, come into his hall, and he meditated a due reward for his invention and for his loyalty, which he doubted not would lead him to display here some noble exploit in Palestine of Richard the Lion, whose deeds he had in part already sung.

"Who is there," said King Henry, "would not think that show were living

truth? The light is on the hill, as if the sun shone there."

While he spoke, there rose from behind the hill a line of spears and crescents as of a vast army of Saracens coming down upon the Franks. As they came on, you might perceive their helms and brazen visors, till they spread down all the hill unto the tents of the Franks. Then might you faintly hear the clash of cymbals, the dread bray of Saracen-horns and, ever and anon, the thump of tabours. And now the fight began between the armies; and King Henry joyed to see Prince Edward watching all that was here enacting; he seemed to have King Richard's heart in very trowth.

When the fight began, which was fought as if for very life and soul, the Franks fought with bows, swords, spears, iron-maces and battle-axes; the Saracens with spears and scymiters chiefly. Pre-

sently was seen the knight, who had set sail in the ship, fighting hard with two Saracens. There were few in the hall, that night, who, when they saw him so hard driven, did not think of the poor lady and her little children, whom he had left behind, and wish him victory for their sakes, as well as for his holy cause. These Saracens wore frightful masks of brass, and laid about them with so great strength, that it seemed the knight must fall. He broke his spear, and then he fought with battle-axe, and was nigh being overthrown, when another knight attacked the Saracens; and the first, having now but one enemy left, went off the field fighting with him manfully.

And so the battle held on, near to a besieged city; the Saracens, who were in it, sending forth wild fyre, called fyre-grekys, most like in shape to dragons and other dreadful beasts. Those, who beheld this,

wondered at the surpassing cunning of the jongleur, and began to think he was one of those from the East, who practised arts of delusion; for, some such they were. There were even wooden towers set up, without the walls, by the Franks, that played their darts into the ramparts like unto hail. There were also mangenelles, which cast stones, and the famous mate-griffon, invented by Richard the Lion; yet still no where was he seen in this pageant, so it was guessed this showed not a battle of his time, though it was fought where he had conquered. Presently, there came a pell-mell of Knights and Saracens, hand to hand, and, amongst them, that same knight, who had first appeared departing from his own land. He was again hard beset, but he brought down his nearest enemy to the ground, and the others then betook them elsewhere. He disarmed him, and held his

wrested sword over his head. The foe begged his life, which the knight granted, but kept the sword, and with its aid, rescued a brother-knight from an enemy, and then departed.

Soon, flames involved the city; then thick clouds of smoke involved the whole in darkness; the shouts and trumpets sunk faint and fainter, and then were heard no more, and that glorious sight was gone for ever, no one saw how! Attention still pursued the sounds, and there was yet in the hall deep silence, when other notes than those of war began to breathe, notes of such sweet and lively joy, as thrilled the hearts of all, who heard them.

As they drew nigher, there came into the hall that rehersed sea-shore, with that rehersed ship upon the waves, and you might discern the pilot at the helm, and the sea-boys in their places; and straight

that knight was landed. He kneeled, then with both hands held his shield on high, and looked up to the heavens; then he kissed the strand, the music playing all the while so solemn and soft, that not only many fair eyes, but many manly ones too, shed tears. Then the knight rose up, and departed, and the scene disappeared.

And now other sounds were heard, but of what instruments none knew. They were grave and sad, with sometimes dreary pauses, that made many to shake. Then a forest appeared, with gloomy woods, and no sunshine seen, save one gleam, which showed travellers coming on, as if to some towers, the tops of which were seen over the woods; and many in the hall said these looked like the towers of Kenilworth; others said they were different. It was now, when the light was failing on these towers, that a torch carried by one of the travellers be-

gan to cast its gleam beneath the boughs, and showed them to be three horsemen well appointed, one of whom appeared to be the very knight from Palestine; who the others were none knew; but the King viewed them with close attention, and with seeming displeasure; and now not one word was spoken in the hall, and every eye was watching what would befall next.

Anon there came out from the wood three men armed, and with masks upon their faces, who soon came up with the travellers and attacked them. These defended themselves as well as they could; but the knight being armed, it was he who fought well nigh for all. Now many stood up in the hall, and a murmur and confused noise ran through it, for they guessed in their hearts what this meant.

The Knight had his helmet on, but the visor was open, and thus was his face ex-

posed; on his helmet stood a raven for his crest, with open beak and wings half-spread. He fought manfully with the stoutest of the robbers, whose mask falling down to the ground, it was too plain, that his countenance was the likeness of one then living in the hall and standing by the King's chair. On this, every one in the hall, not excepting the Ladies, stood up, some looking eagerly to the high board, and others to the pageant, while his Highness spake not, but sat as if sternly determined to watch this extraordinary delusion to the end; nor did he once look towards any one, who stood near him.

The end soon came; for the robber, wresting in a great struggle a sword from the Knight, plunged it through his open visor, and he fell from his horse, a dead man. Then was there a universal groan throughout the hall. The robber departed, with the sword in his hand, and darkness

fell over the whole scene, which appeared no more.

Now, the King rose impatiently from his chair, with looks of anger, and was about to inquire who had invented this deception, when he perceived before him again, standing on the steps of the dais, that very figure, clad in arms, which had before appeared there; and he knew it for the likeness of that murdered Knight, whose fate he had just witnessed. There stood the raven on his helm, and there too, within its shade, appeared a countenance of deadly paleness, shrunk and fixed somewhat angrily upon the King. His Highness, for a while, stood petrified and with eyes amazed, as if he saw something that might not, with any endeavour, be understood; he seemed to strive for speech, and at last faintly uttered, "Who art thou, and what is thy errand?"

Then, the Knight, pointing with his

sword to the Baron de Blondeville, who stood, trance-bound, beside the King's chair, his eyes glared, and a terrible frown came over his face. The Archbishop made the holy sign, as he had already done, this night before, when the King had seen nothing strange near him; and then stood with arms extended on high.

The figure still pointed with his sword to the Baron. Again, the King vainly demanded of the stranger, who he was? and, receiving no answer, gave order that he should be seized.

Then it was, that the Prior of St. Mary's, having approached the King, suddenly stepped forward to arrest the stranger; though such service pertained not much to him; but he might have spared his pains; for, where he would have seized upon the stranger, he eluded his grasp, and stood afar off in the hall; and the Prior, struck with dismay, attempted not to

pursue him. Then, his Highness, in great disorder, commanded, that all the doors should be shut, that he, who practised this delusion on the sight, might be discovered.

And forthwith, his Highness was obeyed; but the stranger glee-man, who was the person suspected, was no longer to be found. A murmur went in the hall, that he was an Arabian jongleur—for, wondrous arts and deceptions those from the East were known to practise; and he was sought for without the hall, in many parts of the castle; but no where could he be seen, or heard of; nor could Maister Henry, the versifier, be found in the hall, whom the King called for, thinking he might know something of this jongleur, or how that strange mysterie, which had been shown forth, was brought about. Hearing this, the King was much moved; and commanding that the search should

be continued, he left the hall by a private passage, leading to his own chambers, followed by the Queen and her ladies; the young Baroness being among them, who went off to her Highness's bower.

The King, attended, by his especial order, only of the Archbishop, the Bishop confessor, the Prior of St. Mary's and the Baron de Blondeville, withdrew to his privy-chamber. When there, and the door closed, the Baron fell on his knee, and besought his Highness not to deliver him over unto the malice and envy of his enemies, who had invented this device to work his ruin. His Highness answered, the devices of his enemies should cause their own ruin, and that soon.

Now came to the chamber, Maister Henry amazed and trembling; for he was one, who rejoiced so much in good fortune, that he could bear other as ill as any man: and the King's frown was now

upon him. His Highness asked, whether he knew aught of the jongleur, who had been that night in the hall, or of the mysterie, that had been there enacted; for, in his heart, the King suspected, that Henry knew something of the matter.

Maister Henry, confounded by the King's angry looks, knew not well what he answered; which confirming the suspicions against him, his Highness hastily said, that if it should be found he had assisted in devising that delusion, which being an insult to the Baron, whom he favoured, was one also to himself, he should surely repent his misconduct; nor should he go entirely free, if he had obtained an entrance into the hall for that jongleur; and forthwith his Highness commanded him to depart to his chamber, there to remain, till called forth by his order.

Now it was that Maister Henry better found his speech, and it was to protest

his innocence of that device; and his ignorance, touching the jongleur, who had that night appeared in the hall, there to practise the glamour-art; but this availed him little in the present mood of his Highness, till he entreated, that the master of the revels and the marshal of the hall should be called into his presence, and questioned, as to what they knew of the conducting of that pageant. The King consented, and they were called accordingly; the marshal being still busy in the hall, helping there to the finding out of the stranger, but in vain. This he now made known to the King, and scrupled not to say, he believed the whole to be the work of magic, worked by that jongleur and by the prisoner then in a tower of this castle.

The master of the revels said the same, for that he had no hand in that mysterie; nor had he seen any preparations made

for it; nor did any one in the hall know in what way it had entered. Then he took his Highness to witness, how it was possible, so marvellous a pageant, showing so many changes, and such a multitude of people, could have been completed, without long pains and trouble; and therefore, how it could have been effected, unless by the glamour-art; but no preparation for this had been seen by any; nor knew he or any one how the different changes had entered the hall. The jongleur had sitten there the while, playing on his harp, but he had drawn from it sounds of many different instruments, that sometimes had seemed close where he sat; and at others far off in the hall; the music, that had been heard there, was not of the King's minstrels!

On this, the Prior of St. Mary's came forward, and, having craved leave to speak, which was granted, told the King

he doubted not, that the whole deception had been wrought by the King's enemies, with certain spells of magic, such as were sometimes resorted to, in desperate cases, and in this it was not the Baron's downfall alone that they meditated, but the deliverance of their partner in guilt: the merchant now in jeopardy. Of such unlawful arts of magic, the Prior added, that his Highness himself had once proof, when the precious ring, that was to render him invincible in battle, was conjured away from under the bolts and locks of his casket, (those remaining unbroken,) and was conveyed away by the Earl of Kent, as his Highness had declared, and given to his dire enemy, Llewellyn of Wales, then in arms against him.

The King seemed struck with this, but not well pleased with the choice of this time for remembering an occurrence, which, it is true, he had himself in council

asserted to be supernatural; and had even urged, amongst other matters, in accusation of the loyalty of that lord. His Highness seemed not well to know how he should take this speech of the Prior, and he cast upon him an eye of doubt, but he said nought.

"My liege," added the Prior, "when I saw the astoundment, that came over the Baron de Blondeville, this morn in the chapel, I guessed it was a spell that fixed him. When I saw him in the hall, this night, twice in the same state, I held more surely it was so; but, when I beheld that marvellous delusion of the pageant, for who could suppose such surpassing scenes were wrought by hands—when I beheld that, I was convinced, in very truth, that magic was at work! and so I doubt not was my Lord Archbishop, by his gestures.

The King, assenting in his mind to this latter assertion, having observed, as before

rehersed, the gesture of the Archbishop, turned towards him, and asked why he made that sacred sign? To which the Archbishop answered, he had used it to protect his Highness and all around from the evil, that he perceived was near him. At these words the countenances of the Baron and of the Prior brightened. Further the King inquired, why twice in the hall, when he had asked the same question, the Archbishop had returned no answer? To this, the Archbishop again made no reply; but bent his head with that look, both solemn and submissive, which he had before put on: till, being further urged, he replied, he "had not dared to answer!" on which the King showed surprise and displeasure; but then seemed, on a sudden, to restrain the expression of either.

The Prior said, the Archbishop had done well; but the Archbishop showed no

pleasure at this, and deigned not to turn an eye on the Prior.

"Did you," said the King, "think your answer would endanger you?"

"My liege, I knew I should be endangered by it."

"How! when I commanded?" said the King; "but you feared the force of magic?"

"No! my liege."

The King looked again astonished, and the Prior curious. "Whence then was your danger?" said his Highness.

"From the malice of an evil sprite, my liege!" answered the Archbishop.

At this, the Prior, with a sarcastic countenance, said, "Perhaps, my Lord Archbishop has not told the whole: I have heard it said,—I speak it with submission, for I mean not to throw slander, —I have heard it said he doubts of witchcraft, if so he may doubt of magic!"

On this, the Archbishop, turning loftily to him that spoke, said, "The Archbishop of York comes not to the King's court to make confession to the Prior of St. Mary's!"

Then the King, seeing the weighty displeasure of my Lord of York and the rising anger of the Prior, interposed, and put an end to further question between them; but the Archbishop's eyes were sternly fixed upon the Prior's, which fell beneath them. He then craved a private hearing of the King, for to-morrow, and departed; leaving the Prior angry and confused, but not dismayed; for, soon as he was gone, he said in a low voice, which yet might be heard by the King, "so depart from me all prejudice and callousness of heart."

To which the Baron said, "Such is my wish too."

The King, convinced, by this time, of

the innocence of Maister Henry, the versifier, ordered with kind words that he should be dismissed, and then, commanding all present to avoid the chamber, save the Baron de Blondeville, and the Prior of Saint Mary's, remained in close council with them, though it were past midnight.

Meanwhile, the whole company below in the hall remained close shut up, while the search was yet going on in the chambers and gallery above, for those, who might have been concerned in this marvellous deception. There were the marshal, the steward, the constable of the castle, and other great officers attending, to look after the little ones; but none of them could find either the supposed knight, or the glee-man. There were divers sayings and reports went forth on this matter, as, indeed, you must expect, without my telling; but most present held this strange accident was brought about with magic,

and that by the inveterate malice of the Baron de Blondeville's accuser and his secret friends. Some few there were who remarked, that by this same power of magic, did he possess it, the prisoner had done better to release himself from prison bond, but these were soon put to silence by others; and, whatever was thought, nothing more was said.

And so ended the festival in hall, this night, every one departing to his lodging in the castle, or to his home in his own or his friend's castle, or mansion, with his own thoughts on the strange accident, that had befallen.

And, whatever might pass that night in this hall, raised up by beings of another region, nothing was known of it by those of this; for none would venture thither; and none, save the poor prisoner in his tower, would even look down from the chamber upon the windows of that hall.

And so that place was in darkness and in silence, which so lately had been illuminated, had echoed with song and laugh, and was animated with the pomp of beauty and of a court—emblem of life and death!

The darkness of the hall was observed of the merchant from his turret lattice, for, he had watched much there this night, led thither by the sound of minstrelsy, and by a longing of his spirit to hover over the haunt of beings like unto himself. In the misery of his solitude, his heart would often change, and, like unto one tossing on a fever bed, who continually shifts his limbs in the hope of a little ease, so he went from his pallet to his window to escape from his own thoughts, and from his window to his pallet to avoid those sounds of joy and revelry, at which his heart sometimes sickened, when he remembered his wife and children, yet igno-

rant of his condition and his dead friend, whose cruel assassin was now his own dangerous enemy. Thus, he passed the hours, which to most in the castle had gone by with joy and abundance; he alone being ignorant of those marvellous appearances, which the Prior had not scrupled to say were raised by his art.

And so strongly did the Prior urge to the King, this night, the danger to be dreaded not by the Baron only, but by his Highness, from the powerful malice of the agents of the prisoner, acting by his art, if he were suffered to live, that the King resolved to have the matter fully inquired into to-morrow, in open court, his-self, sitting on the bench. But the Prior and the Baron, who had overheard the Archbishop's entreaty for a hearing, and feared he might unsettle the King's resolution, urged the matter still further, and representing the danger of waiting a jury-trial,

dared to hint at sentence by other modes. The Baron even finished by saying, that not a moment of his life was safe, while his malicious accuser lived.

Whether the King fully understood, or no, what they meant by the words "other modes," he did not fall into their plan, but repeated, that on the morrow, a Jury should be summoned.

They then spoke plainly of trial by ordeal, but his Highness instantly rejected it. It was indeed over bold of them to propose such trial, knowing, as the Prior must know, that King Henry had shown his abhorrence of it, even in the first year of his reign, when he had abolished that cruel instrument of fraudulent oppression. And his Highness seemed not now well pleased; for, he straight dismissed them both, for this night.

Forth they went of the King's chamber together, and withdrew to consult further

on this affair. It is plain the Baron had by some means gained the Prior, who was no true son of the church, to his interest. It was agreed between them, that he should lose no time in gaining admittance to the prisoner, for his own purposes, which might be done, under pretence of confessing him; and that before he left the castle, this night. Having fully settled their plot, they quitted the chamber, and were returning to the great stair-case through the brown gallery, now left of every one, who had rejoiced there, that day, when the Baron made a sudden stop, and, taking a torch from the hands of one of the silver images, which lighted that gallery, shook it on high.

The Prior, turning to inquire wherefore this was done, saw standing beside them, that same armed knight, who had appeared in the hall! While the Baron stood with eyes fixed upon this stranger,

a wound in the forehead opened, and distilled three drops of blood, which fell unnoticed on the Baron's robe.

The Prior had well nigh sunk to the ground, but recovered himself enough to utter faintly, after some solemn words,—"Who art thou?" The knight frowned upon him, but spake not; and presently disappeared, leaving the dismayed companions almost senseless.

They, however, left the gallery together; but, when they had reached the head of the stairs, the sound of cheerful voices was heard in an antechamber, and the Baron, encouraged by them, turned thither. But those, who talked, were only pages in waiting on some lord of the court, and they were still speaking of the marvellous occurrence in the great hall, that night, when the Baron appeared. Standing aside to let him pass, they wondered at his wild looks, as he went on to

an inner chamber, where their masters sat.

The Prior, having also taken a light from one of the silver warriors, that held torches over the great stair-case, descended alone, and was passing through the upper court of the castle, when, finding himself approaching one of the King's guard, on watch, he immediately extinguished the torch, and passed the man without it; but, whether he took his way to the prison-tower, or to the castle-gate, his further course was unknown; for, he was no more seen, that night.

THE THIRD DAY.

THE THIRD DAY.

HERE was a drawing of a castle seated loftily on a rock, hung with thick wood, and having many towers on the precipice. In the margin was a portrait of an Archbishop, in his pontifical robes, probably designed for the Archbishop of York.

THE THIRD DAY.

On the morn next following the day of festival, my Lord of York had long speech of the King, and it was supposed, amongst other things, that he had been arguing against the truth of magic; for he was suspected of divers notions of that sort; it was also thought, that he had given no very favourable opinion of that same Prior of Saint Mary's. However this might be, his Highness, when he came forth of his chamber, was noticed to be thoughtful, and somewhat sad, and, though the summons for a jury was that day issued, his Highness seemed willing to let that matter rest awhile.

Instead of sitting in court of justice and on the judgment-seat, as he had sitten at Winchester, his Highness went hunting the stag in the forest, to his own contentment and to the great joy of his courtiers. And, ywis, this was a better chace, through these deep glades, and woods, than that upon the wooden mountain in the great hall; and more sweet and cheerily did the bugles sound along the valleys and upon the open hills than through the roofs and galleries of Kenilworth. There went with the King all of estate in the court (save the bishops) with the foresters of Ardenn, and also a train of gentils and gallants, to the number of many hundreds, and a great throng of people on foot.

The forest was covered with them, for miles, and nothing but the sound of bugles and other joyous instruments was heard through these deep shades, where

quietness had dwelt, day and night, for so long a time before. Others there were, I guess, besides the beasts, lay hid in those pathless shades, listening to the revel rout afar off, and trembling too for very life, as it drew near; for, the forest was so wild and wide, spreading out on all sides and touching divers countries, that it was one of the chief hiding places for out-laws and desperate men in the whole realm of England, as those dwelling in the bordering towns knew to their cost. Many went wandering there, whom the world little thought of; and, who, had they been seen, could hardly have been guessed to belong to it, they had become so rude and uncouth in their seeming.

In the chase the King spied the towers of the Lord of Warwick, high over the woods, and that pleasant river of Avon, flowing beneath. The Earl, who was of his company, besought his Highness to

repair thither, and to refresh himself in his castle; to which the King gave consent, that he might judge of it; his Highness being a great esteemer of the builder's art, and proficient in it, as his Abbey of Saint Peter, then rearing at Westminster, and the cathedral at Salisbury fully show; so he rode towards that castle; but, when he had mounted up the rock, he stopped before the great gates, in admiration of those warlike towers and hanging battlements, that rose so proudly over him. Then, he passed under the gateway into a court, surrounded by those towers, which all know to be of such vast strength, the bugles echoing through every arch and battlement, till he reached that pleasant side, where the turrets hang upon the precipice, that overlooks the Avon river.

As far as eye could reach, even in furthest west, to the broad hills of Gloucester, all the country, stretching below, was

wood, or forest-pasture, with here and there the tops of spires and towers, whose convents and villages were so hidden in boughs, that, but for those little signs, you could not have guessed there were any goodly people dwelling in all that space. The King was well pleased with all that he saw at this castle, as he had been before; but with nothing so much as with that broad and majestic round tower, standing guard, as it were, at the south-east end of the castle, with pending battlements, where, all night long, townmen marched around, and where, but high above, in that little turret, the warder keeps his watch.

Here Willoughton laid down the manuscript, and went to a window of his chamber, looking towards Warwick castle, that he might behold under the moonlight the very towers here mentioned. He

easily distinguished the one here pointed out, and, although that called the Record Tower, at the other extremity of the eastern front, was admirable for beauty of proportion," he had many reasons for preferring the other; of which reasons there were two, first, that it was more ancient and had existed, at the time the manuscript referred to; secondly, that it wore an aspect of severer grandeur, and that by its singular construction, it showed forth much of the watch-and-ward habits and warlike foresights of that age. Willoughton thought he could never be weary of looking at it, under this shadowy moon-light; and already he fancied he could perceive half-armed men, on guard, pacing the battlement, and the warder's fire blazing on the summit and contending with the moonlight. The watch-signal too he heard; for, what else could be that, which passed on the wind, and which seemed to him so solemn, yet wild and so different

from any thing heard in these "piping times of peace" and luxury. Curiosity, as to the tale he was reading, brought him back, at last, to the manuscript and to King Henry.)

King Henry stood long at a window of that side of the castle, which overhangs the Avon, and there he beheld, with delight, the great cedars growing on a steep rock over the river, on whose out-spreading tops he looked down, as on a carpet of dark velvet, varied with silver. Certain, that castle of Warwick has a more pleasant scite, than this of Kenilworth; for, there your eye was carried, far and wide, over woods to the hills of other countries; where at Kenilworth, you see only the woods of its own valley, with the lake shining below them. Yet there were, who better liked the quiet shade of those majestic woods, that seemed to shut out

all the world, save when the King brought it hither, than the more free and lightsome prospect from the walls of Warwick; but, for mine own part, it was not so with me.

When that his Highness, had tasted a manchet and had taken a cup of the fragrant Burgundy wine, of which my Lord of Warwick had good store, he hunted back to Kenilworth, followed by some of Warwick, whom he knew not of.

That night, the King kept his estate in the great chamber, with the Queen and all her Court. There were the King's minstrels and there again was Pierre, the Queen's harper, who, by command from his Highness, sang forth a lay, made by Maria, the French Poetess, who was now at the Court, as aforesaid. She had presented her book to the King,* full of marvelous histories, right pleasureful to hear, although they were not all true, nathless she had said to the contrary in the pre-

amble to her book. The lay, played forth this night, was that of "Guildeluce and Gualadun," or, as some call it, "The lay of Eledire." This was a Knight of Bretagne famous for his high qualities, loved and honoured by his Sovereign, but envied and hated by many in the Court, who, gaining the ear of their Prince, at length persuaded him to banish him they conspired against from the Court and his country, leaving behind him a beautiful and excellent wife, whom they contrived to prevent from accompanying him.

It was said by many, in King Henry's Court, that he commanded this lay to be sung, as a lesson to the enemies of the young Baron, that he suspected them of malice. Others said the example of Guildeluce might be a warning also to the young Baroness; for, they thought that of the two Guildeluce was the greater hero, as you shall hear. This wise and valour-

ous Knight, Sir Eledire, after vowing everlasting truth to his unhappy wife, set sail for England, there to seek adventures; and soon he found them. After achieving wonders, with the help of the ten knights he carried with him, in aid of a Prince of this country, he finished his exploit by falling in love with that King's daughter, contrary to all his former reputation, and setting his passion to fight with his duty, which had hitherto been sworn friends. There was a long contest, but unfortunately his passion conquered. Then, being recalled by his own Sovereign, who could not go on without him, having lost by his absence a great part of his territory, he carries off the young Princess, and returns to his affectionate Wife, estranged yet woe-begone. The young Princess, who was as good as she was beautiful, soon as she heard the Knight had a wife, swooned away, and, not sa-

tisfied with that, died out-right. The Knight goes nearly mad, and his distressed wife, to whom no one had told the whole truth, goes to a hermitage in a wood, to find out the secret cause of his distraction. There she sees the corpse of the beautiful Princess, and all jealousy and anger are lost, in compassion for her piteous fate.

Presently, the Princess by a charm is brought to life again; and what does this excellent wife, but determine to found a nunnery, and resign her beloved husband to the beautiful Princess. But the Knight, her husband, would not be out-done in generosity, and what does he do, but build that very nunnery to receive her, and, having thus rewarded that excellent wife, he marries the beautiful Princess, without further fighting between affection and conscience.

Whether the young Baroness might be inclined, if tried, to profit by the example

of this excellent wife is not known; but most surely some ladies would not; for, they scrupled not to take pains to say, that this was one of those lays of Marie, which were not true. They would not give it credence for a moment.

This lay, although we have here cut it short, rivalled Maister Henry's ballad for wearisome length; but the sweet thrumming of Pierre made the King endure it better; when it was well ended, there was great dancing amongst the ladies, and his Highness commanded the Baron de Blondeville to dance with the Lady Beatrice, and they went a solemn round together, to the joy of all that beheld them. You would have thought by his looks the young Baron had utterly forgotten what he had seen in hall and gallery, the night before; for, none in the court seemed more proud, or high in spirit, than he, or danced with a better grace.

The Archbishop of York was at the King's right hand, the whole even; but the Prior of Saint Mary's came not near the castle, all that night. Nothing happened to disturb the festival there; but at the priory was a strange accident.

It was before the first watch of matins, that a lay-brother went into the priory church to trim the lights, when, behold! the place, instead of being well lighted, was in total darkness, save that a gleam from the moon came in through the windows. Eadwyn could hardly trust his sight; for, never in man's memory, had the tapers there ceased to burn. But, while yet he stood amazed, he noticed something shining near the East end, as if a person stood there; and, the moon, soon after, coming out more brightly, he perceived the gleaming of steel; it was an armoured man standing still near a window, or rather under it.

Eadwyn had heard of what had passed, the night before, in the castle-hall; and he instantly became convinced this was the same appearance, which had caused so much marvel there. While yet he looked the figure pointed downward to the ground, near its own feet; but Eadwyn dared not to look again, but fled, as fast as age would permit him, to alarm the whole brotherhood.

Straight, they all flocked together to the church, failing not to bless themselves by the way; but, when they came there, the lights were burning as usual, and nothing new was to be seen in the place! Yet Eadwyn persisted in his say, and, pointing out the spot, where the supposed knight had stood, it was found to be over a grave-stone, without a name—so antient did it seem. The monks pored upon the stone; but, if a name had ever been there, not a letter could now be traced; and, if

any present did guess whose bones were laid beneath, not one did choose to say.

The disturbance, caused by this strange accident, soon reaching the ears of the Prior, he forthwith came to the church, and, seeing the brethren in such number over this grave, it was noticed he looked more stern than ever; but, when they told what brother Eadwyn had related, he made light of the matter, and said, that his health must be looked to, for that infirmity of mind foretold infirmity of body. Then, he ordered him straight to his cell, there to diet on bread and water, for seven days.

Thus he ended the matter for this night, and in less than seven days did brother Eadwyn, poor man, end his sentence, for, he died on the fourth day, being of above three-score and ten years, and of spare habit, having never been much in the Prior's favour. As he was

proceeding to his cell, the prior failed not to foretell from what he called the distemper of the brain, that his end was approaching; but all, who heard him, took not this matter, as he willed. He ended by warning the brethren not to go by night into the church, save at usual times, when all assembled, lest the folly of Eadwyn might disturb their minds with strange dreamings. Some, who heard him, smiled in secret, notwithstanding their grave deportment, and others, with wonder and trembling, promised to obey.

THE FOURTH DAY

THE FOURTH DAY.

Here was a drawing of a forest, with a long cavalcade and procession, in other modes of the Court, winding under the shades. In the distance, where the light fell, tents appeared in a pleasant glade, and thence seemed advancing a body of Archers.

THE FOURTH DAY.

KING Henry having commanded, that his court of justice should open, on the morrow, in the White-hall, in the castle, to administer the laws of his realm, summoned, this day, a court of pleasure, to attend him in the forest. The Archbishop was not of his train. Early in the morning, he had departed on his way to Coventry, a short journey from this castle, to visit the Bishop, Roger de Wesham, who there lay sick, at Saint Mary's. And this he did not only in kindness towards him, but for certain more private reasons. Since his discourse with the King, his

Highness had seemed willing to move more deliberately in this business of the Baron, and to sift it to the bottom, that the foul slander, as he held it to be, which had been thrown upon his favoured servant, might be exposed, as well as that his life might in future be shielded from the evil arts of sorcery, if such should appear to have been practised by his accuser, in the hall of banquet.

His Highness guessed not, that other than just means might be resorted to against the merchant's life, while he remained in prison, friendless and a stranger, as he was, in this place; much less suspected he, that, in his own court of justice a verdict might be given against an innocent man. A jury had been summoned in this matter, and had been ordered to be in readiness, however suddenly called upon to meet in court. And there the matter rested, his Highness, meaning to keep up this festival with princely

diversions, having gone forth, with the Queen and all his court, to divert himself in the chase of Kenilworth and forest of Ardenn.

The Queen was in her litter, hung with purple velvet, broidered with gold, drawn by milk-white steeds richly harnessed; six esquires riding before her; with divers of her Court, and six pages running beside her, and compassed all about, with noble ladies and officers of her state. Chiefest among the ladies, for gracefulness, went the Baroness de Blondeville on a white palfrey. A palfrey of the like, led by two pages, followed the Queen, for her Highness to ride when she should so mind. The Countesses of Cornwall and Pembroke-Montfort were likewise in their litters, gorgeously apparelled, with a press of noble dames compassing them about and pages and footmen.

Before the King rode the Lord Warden of this forest, attended by the Verderer

and other guardians of the vert and venison, with fifty archers, clothed in green, moving in pairs, and sounding by turns their bugles, with right merry glee. First began the four nearest his Highness, and, when they took breath, eight struck up, further on; then again six sounded, and so the music rose and fell throughout the line with most sweet changes. The sound roused up the stags in the forest, and many a one afar off was seen to bound athwart the avenues from shade to shade. But the King came not to hunt, this day, nor would he let an arrow be levelled at any he saw, though this might have been done, without fear of hitting; for they flitted from gloom to gloom, like a sunbeam among clouds, and hardly could you tell when they had passed.

But that, which most delighted the Queen's ladies in these wild woods was to see the nimble squirrels climbing among

the boughs, and springing from branch to branch, so full of happy life it was a pleasure to behold. And some, when they had gained the topmost boughs, would quietly sit, cracking the chesnuts and securely looking, with their full, quick eyes, on the company below.

There, I fear, were some, overborne by their own evil passions and galled by the consciousness of them, who might look up to those poor animals, with momentary envy. And doubtless many, who had not these painful reasons for choice, thought it were better so to live amongst these woodlands, in blessed ease and sprightly health, than confined in the golden trammels of a court, where every feeling was checked, that it might move only to certain steps of order, and nature was so nearly forgotten, that, if perchance she did appear, she was pitied and reproved for a child of ignorance, and straight altered

after their own fashion. And there were few, who, when they came abroad amongst the hills and forests and the free air and the open sunshine, and heard the joy of birds, and saw the playful grace and glee of animals, there were few, who felt not their spirits dance, although they knew not it was in sympathy with free and guileless nature, which, if they never more could resume it, yet could they never, even in spite of themselves, entirely cease to love.

This noble company had not gone many miles under these forest shades, ere their horns were answered by others, afar off, that made every hill and dell to ring; yet feared they not what this might mean, nor made halt to inquire. Presently, coming where the woods opened, they espied in a green lane a demi-circle of tents, and on the hills beyond a body of archers—out-laws they seemed to be—three hundred at

the least, drawn up in battle-array, as if ready to meet them. The noble company nothing daunted, still advanced, and the King ordered his bugles to sound a parley; the which was no sooner done, than all the echoes of those hills answered with horns, and straight the captain of the band came down upon that little plain, attended by twelve of his archers and by two pages, one leading a brace of milk-white greyhounds, in a chain of steel, the other bearing his bow and arrow. These approached the King, cap in hand, and then, dismounting from their hobbies, the captain, who was no other than the King's bowman of this forest, taking his bow and arrow from the page, fell on one knee, and presented them to his Highness.

The King, having shot off the arrow, graciously returned the bow, with a purse of gold, and bade him rise, which he refused to do, until his Highness, and the

Queen should grant his petition, which was, that they would repair to the tents, and there rest; while his archers sought to entertain them with their bows. This granted, the bow-bearer rose, and, leading those snowlike greyhounds, whose necks were bound with collars of ebony inlaid with silver, presented them to the King, as lord of this forest. But they were the Queen and her ladies, who best welcomed those delicate animals, admiring their slender forms and dainty coats, white as the ermine on their own mantles.

Forthwith, their Highnesses, with this noble company, repaired to the tents, where they found venison ready prepared for them, with other game, such as these woods afforded, and wines and fruits of Autumn, all set forth on boards dressed out with oaken boughs, so that every table seemed a bower. The rustic seats of the King and Queen were raised on turf, not

carpeted with tapestry, but strewed with flowers, and, for their canopies of estate, they had arching branches of chesnut, wreathed with sweet woodbine. The wine was brought in beechen cups, carved from that noble tree, that stretched forth its mighty branches over the King's tent, and then sent out its spray, so lightly and so proudly, above the flag of England waving there. Also, instead of damask water in golden ewers, water, clear as crystal was brought in beechen cups, and in hunters' horns, bound with silver, from the wild brook, that ran among the rocks, and that made, in its lonely course, still music under the green shadows.

It was a goodly sight to behold the tents ranged beneath the trees on the short sward, filled with fresh ladies and other noble company; and the King's tent, where attended the Lord Warder and all the officers of the forest, in their

peculiar habits of ceremony—encompassed by his archers in green, with lords and knights in hunting habits, and with esquires and pages in his Highness's livery, glittering with divers colours. The place of every one was so well ordered, that there seemed not any crowd; each rank being set forth to the eye in due degree of beauty and proportion; one beyond another. And first, between the tents, stood the King's demi-lances, and the archers, who had run before him; behind these were the King's horsemen, and others of his train. Somewhat apart stood the Queen's litter, having her cloth of estate over it, with her richly caparisoned palfrey, and pages in waiting; near it were the sumpter-litters of her sister, and of the Countess of Pembroke-Montfort, with coursers, squires and grooms, countless. But the chief sight was the tents circling this pleasant green, all filled with estates

and gentils, freshly apparelled, and with banquet-boards so gaily decked, and the lofty trees of beech and oak that overtopped them all.

On the hills, opposite to the demi-circle of these tents, were drawn out the three hundred foresters, who feigned to be outlaws of the forest, presenting Robin Hood and his company.

And, when the King and Queen had refreshed themselves, the Lord Warden of Ardenne, his-self, who had withdrawn from the banquet, came riding up to the tent, blowing the ivory horn, which was hung about his neck with a chain of silver, and which was the sign of the charter, by which he held his office, and having done homage, asked, if it so pleased his Highness, to see his archers shoot; to which a gracious answer being given, the Warden gave signal to the bow-bearer, who straight made sign to his men, and the whole troo

shot off their arrows, which had whistles in the head, with so loud a noise as amazed and rejoiced the hearts of all present, and roused the stags from their coverts, and sent the birds from their leafy homes in flights, athwart the sky.

Then, were many noble bows drawn to shoot at the deer, as they scudded away under the shades; but the Queen benevolently said, "Nay; shall our delight in these pleasant woods, be the cause of suffering to their innocent tenants! Let every beast and bird be free and happy now, as we are." And his Highness said it should be so this day, and forbade them to shoot. A fence had been fixed, as was the worthless way, and the game was to have been driven into it, and there shot at by her Highness and the ladies of her court. For this purpose, also, there had been prepared arrows, plumed with peacock's feathers, and having heads of bright

silver; and now, that a better sport might not be lost, hazel wands were set up, at due distance; from which were suspended garlands of roses, roses of Provence, the Queen's country, for such they seemed, whether the work of nature or of cunning skill; and at these garlands the ladies of her Highness practised for prizes, which the Queen distributed, who, naithless that this adventure had seemed to fall out by accident, was well aware of all that was to happen, and came prepared for it.

His Highness's sister, the Lady Pembroke-Montfort, won a golden arrow, and the young Baroness de Blondeville a silver bugle; which the Baron, her lord, tuned up in most sweet triumph of her victory.

After these feats, the archers of Robin Hood practised with their bows, the hazel-wands having been removed to more than treble the distance; and they played off

such cunning skill, as made marvel all those, who had before prided themselves in their own performances. Often were the rosy garlands scraped by their darts; or the hazel-wands that held them, shivered. A sheaf of silver arrows and a bow were the prize of the Lord Warden, the captain of the band, who was also well-known to be the best bow-man. After they had ended this sport, they went through divers courses and devices on horseback, feigning a battle, and sounding their bugles, and hiding in the woods; and then coming back, in pursuit of one another, to the great delight of the whole court; and to none more than to the Prior of Saint Mary's, who was in the King's train; for he joyed in sports of the forest more than well became one of his calling.

And no sooner was this ended, than there was heard from that woody brow,

behind the tents, a sound of sweet minstrelsy, of tabours and flutes and viols and other joyous instruments, the which signal was well understood of many present. Straight, the King and Queen, with the chief nobles and gentils of their courts, departed thither-ward, whence the sound came, leaving the rest and the archers of the forest, to make merry in the tents.

Having gone up, beneath the woods, their Highnesses came at last to that lofty brow, where the minstrels were assembled, and which overlooked the country, far and near, except where the forest-oaks now and then interrupted the prospect. There might you see, as you looked down under their dark branches, the towers of Kenilworth far off in the sun; and, beyond them, all that wide forest-region, reaching to the Charnwood-hills in Leicestershire; so distant, they seemed blue as the air above them, and none here

would have guessed what ancient woods were on their steep sides, dark even as these oaks, which stretched their boughs athwart that lightsome blue.

But neither the lofty spire of the Abbey church of Leicester, Saint Mary de Pratis, nor the town could be spied; for they lay low at the feet of these hills. On another side, you had but to look down, where you could find an alley in the woods, to behold the Castle of Warwick proudly over-topping the vale, and seeming the very lord of those plains, that spread out on all sides, even to the hills of Gloucester, which his Highness had noted from that castle's walls. Some said you might perceive the stately tower of Gloucester Abbey; but of this I know not; for, my eyes could never make it out; yet it might be seen by others, which had not pored so many midnights by the blunt light of tapers; for, this makes

things of day, if they be far off, invisible to eyes so used.

I do remember me, when Robert of Gloucester vaunted of his Abbey, Saint Mary de Pratis, at Leicester, he said from top-most spire you might see beyond a hill of Ardenn; but I believed him not, taking it for a triumph over our Priory, which he said was so darkly closed in of forests, it seemed more like a cell of penance than a good prior's house. And when I asked him how often in the princely castle, that stood nigh his Abbey, King Henry had kept his court, he was put to silence, though he might have remembered that our good King did, at his Abbey, first receive the crown he wore.

From this hill, too, you might espy the town of Coventry, with Saint Mary's, and the convent spires of that village of Eaton, called of the nuns, Nuneaton. Certes, this was a pleasant brow; for, wherever

the woods opened, these wide prospects spread; yet, turning from them, you seemed hid in boughs and lonesome wilds, where neither town nor castle could be seen, nor any pomp, save that blessed one of these shades; nor any living thing, but what they bred.

And here, where the oaks stretched round a green plat, leaving only a little opening towards those blue forest hills of Charnwood, here was a noble tent prepared for King Henry and his court; there was none other on this spot: but seats were cut in the turf around, under the boughs for such as were not of estate; and there, too, sat the minstrel, tuning up with merry glee, opposite to the King's tent, where the woods parted.

When this noble company had rested awhile, and had taken leche lardys and wine, and had spied out from this summit

all, which those, who knew the country, pointed out to them, the Countess of Cornwall went forth of the King's tent; and, according to the pleasant fashion of her country, danced on the green-sward under the trees, with the Lord Simon de Montfort. She moved with a noble grace, as was reported by those present; first, in a bass-dance; and then, springing up with lighter grace, she ended with a measure that showed off all the gaiety of her own land, and so much rejoiced the heart of the Queen, her sister, that, but for her dignity, she would have danced also. I guess it brought back to her mind the festivals of her father's court, in that pleasant land of Southern France, called Provence, where they love to sport in the open air, nigh the shade of woods, and will pass a summer's day to the sound of flutes and viols; their banquets being of

fruit, fresh gathered from the orange-trees and the vines, and being laid forth on the grass, beside some windling brook.

And it was to pleasure the Queen, with a banquet like to what she had been 'customed to in her own country, that King Henry had thus come forth into these forest-shades. This was a day, that suited well his purpose; it was a calm, sunshine day, when the air, so balmy soft, showed every near object as if nought but crystal interposed—and every thing distant—hills, water, sky, as it were dressed in azure; it was surely a blue day, such as is seldom seen in our Island prospect, save in the parting month of autumn, though often in that pleasant part of France, where these diversions seem devised to make the most of the climate.

When that the Countess of Cornwall had ended her dance, the Queen invited

several foreign noble lords and ladies, visitors from her own land, to dance divers rounds of their own country. Amongst these the Baron de Blondeville figured; and truly, when he led off the dance most joyed in by the villagers on the banks of the Rhone, none did so lightly bound, nor throw up his cap in the air, with gayer grace than he. As for the young Baroness, who could trip more blythely, or more delicately express every joyful feeling than she showed here, this day?

Lightly as the willow-spray,
Dancing to the airs of May.

And thus this noble company disported themselves, until the day was far spent; and then set they forth in state and order for Kenilworth, the whole troop of forest-archers attending the King to the gates of the castle, whence they departed not till

after due regale, nor till the sun had well nigh gone down. As they went, his Highness's command was conveyed to them, that they should attend him to hawk on the river of Avon in the forest, and should there partake his banquet.

THE FIFTH DAY AND NIGHT.

THE FIFTH DAY AND NIGHT

Over this Chapter was a drawing of the poor Merchant's prison-chamber; it was night; for, a lamp burned beside the pallet, on which he lay stretched. A face appeared dimly, behind the grating in the back wall.

THE FIFTH DAY AND NIGHT.

THIS day, the King's Court of Justice was opened in the White Hall of Kenilworth, and divers matters adjudged there; but the cause of the merchant came not on. It hath been already related, that King Henry was inclined to move more deliberately in this matter than he had at first been; but there were some about him who were desirous to urge it to a conclusion, before the return of the Archbishop of York from Coventry: and for this they had weighty reasons of their own. It has been shown, that the Archbishop inclined somewhat to the cause of

the poor merchant, and that he was no friend to the Prior of Saint Mary's. Now, neither the Prior, nor the Baron de Blondeville, augured well to themselves from the Archbishop, seeing the manner in which he had held himself towards them; and they sought, by all means, to have the prisoner disposed of, before the return of that powerful and intrepid prelate.

This day, the Prior came to the castle; and, after a private conference with the Baron, in which they settled their plot, the Prior craved hearing of the King, and set forth somewhat of the strange appearance at the Priory, on a late night; but he told only as much of the truth of that adventure as suited himself, and added to it as much falsehood as he dared. Having then declared the whole to be some new artifice, practised by the secret friends of the merchant, he besought the King to relieve the Baron from the unseen dan-

gers, made to impend over him by the malice of his enemies, and which, he said, would not cease so long as his accuser remained unpunished; for that the accusation was a guilty one he had no doubt. To this entreaty the Baron joined his, that the King would end this matter, as might seem right to his Highness, pleading that his peace and honour were alike in jeopardy, during every hour of this season, in which he had looked only for joy and gladness; since, however fully and highly he was honoured by his Highness's favour, and however he his-self might seem, in the face of the court, to bear the slander, neither he, nor any one of those most dearly connected with him, had known one moment of real comfort, since the accusation was first made.

The truth of this King Henry admitted; yet was he firm in refusing to hasten unduly the trial of the merchant; and

they, suspecting that his motive for this was chiefly to have the Archbishop present when it should come on, urged their petitions, till his Highness's visible displeasure put an end to further hearing. And thus the business rested for this time: the Prior departing for his chamber, and the Baron to prepare himself to attend the King, in the great chamber, where his Highness was to keep state. There was rehearsed before the King a Servantois, composed by Maister Denis Pyramus, setting forth divers brave deeds of chivalry. Nothing extraordinary happened this night; and the Court broke up at the usual time, every one seemingly well contented and at peace. But, what human being may look into the secrets of the heart? many, that lay beneath this roof, from King down to serving-man, were pressed with heavy cares, each in his

way, but none more heavily than the Baron de Blondeville.

Now every one was gone to his own chamber, for all night, and the Wayte, with his groom bearing the torch, was going his second round, when a person passed athwart the upper court, who answered not the watch-word. Both the old man and his boy saw this person beside them; but he was gone, before the challenge was repeated; and he was so muffled up in his garment, they could distinguish neither shape, nor feature. But they had marked the way he went, and they followed his steps, which led them to that great tower, still called of Cæsar, which was the keep; on it pended the prison-turret of the merchant. Marvelling who might go there at this hour so privily, they tried the door of entrance, but found it fast, and then the bars of the tower windows, and they too were safe.

The great gate of the Port-cullis, where the wardours kept guard, opened not into this court, but over the ditch, on the other side of the tower; or the wayte would have speedily given the alarm, for he thought all was not right.

He guessed he had mistaken the way this person had gone; but, stepping back and looking up at the tower, his boy spied a light passing by a casement, on high, which he knew led up a stair-case to the prison-chamber. So the old man suspected some plot was going forward for the liberty of him confined there, and he gave an alarm at the door beneath; presently on which, he heard the keeper's voice within; who, being asked whether any one had just entered the tower, answered "No;" and, being then asked whether any one had passed up the stair-case with a light, he said he knew not, others were dwelling in the place, besides himself. The wayte told

him what he had seen in the court, and that he suspected some one had entered the tower with a false key; to which the keeper answered, that could not have been without his hearing; and bade him go on his watch-way, and, if his sight had not deceived him, he would find, perchance, the person he suspected lurking within the court, in the porch, perhaps, of the great hall, or under the arch-way of the white tower. Though the old man thought all was not right, he went his way, and searched the places noted and every other corner of the court; but he found no one. The more marvelling, he determined to look well to the prison-tower, and, if any one came forth of it, to seize him, if he might be strong enough.

And so, having sung out his second round, for this night, he concealed his torch, within a buttress-nook, where it lay smouldering; and then, with his boy, he

took his station in the front of King Henry's lodging, which was opposite to Cæsar's tower. Little did his groom-boy help him; for, he was soon asleep and snoring loudly enough to bid any one lurking in the court to beware of his master; the torch itself could not more surely have betrayed their station; but the aged man, who could better wake than slumber, sat still and watchful on the bench, within that porch, often silencing, though it were but for a minute, his drowsy companion. Still and watchful did he sit in that gloomy porch below; but there was one as still and wakeful in the tower above, lying on his pallet, full of grievous care and dread of what might happen.

This poor merchant, when he knew of what he was accused, saw, that his destruction was appointed, and that the Baron de Blondeville, to save himself, had contrived this pretence of delusions and

evil arts practised by him. He had been told to prepare himself for trial "on the morrow;" and he suspected not that he was deceived, or that there could be any motive for deceiving him, in that respect. The King, as before said, had steadily refused to have the merchant tried on the morrow; who, notwithstanding, had been bidden to hold himself in readiness for that day. And to that morrow he now looked with dread and despair; for, how could he defend himself from that terrible shadow, which he heard his enemies designed to raise up against him? how strike a phantom, which, though armed with the deadly weapons of malice, was invulnerable as the air—the phantom of sorcery? Thus, he foresaw that his sentence was passed: and, when he thought of his distant home, his wife and children, who, ignorant of his wretched state, were now expecting him with fond impatience, from

a foreign land, and whom he must never more behold;—when he thought of this, he was little able to meditate what he should say, or do, when he should be confronted with his enemies. Thus he passed several hours.

At last, when he considered the virtuous motive, which had led him into this jeopardy, and the wickedness of his accusers, pious confidence began to possess his mind; indignation struggled with his grief, and his apprehensions vanished. In these moments, he believed himself capable of rousing conviction in the minds of the judges, by the strength and eloquence of indignation alone. He forgot, that it had hitherto failed him with King Henry; but such courageous hope rose and fell with his sorrow, giving place to deep despondency and weakness, whenever he thought much of his wife and children.

The suddenness of his first appeal to

King Henry prevented him from perceiving the danger of accusing the favourite of a prince; nor considered he his own helplessness, though he was in this place a friendless stranger: he felt only a generous sorrow for his murdered kinsman; be balanced not the difficulties with the justice of his purpose. And, truly, his peril arose not from any indifference of the King to do what was right, but from the want of steadiness in his mind, and from that mis-directed kindness of heart, which made even a suspicion of guilt in one he had esteemed and trusted so painful, that a conviction of it seemed not to be endured. It is well-known, that a weak mind, rather than have such a suffering, will turn aside, and take shelter in willing credulity to its first opinion; a strong one, meeting the worst at once, will proceed straight forward, and, freeing itself from an uncertainty, will do both that, which

is just towards others, and, in the end, best for its own ease. Which of these ways King Henry took will be more fully set forth hereafter.

Such thoughts as these had not occurred to the poor merchant, when most he needed them; but now, in the stillness of his prison, he considered of many things, which, amidst the interests of busy life, he would have passed unheeded. And much and often he pondered on what he should say, on the morrow—the day, as he supposed, of his trial—endeavouring to prepare himself for the questions, that might be asked him. Importuned with such thoughts, he was resting on his pallet, a lamp burning above him; when, without any previous sound even of a step, he heard the key turn in the door of his chamber, and with such cautious gentleness, as if some person tried by stealth to enter. He lay still, listening to what might follow;

but the door opened not, there being a bolt within, that secured the prisoner from nightly intrusion. Of this, the person without knew not; for the key was still moved in the lock; and this showed to the prisoner it was not the keeper, who sought to enter. With a dread of some nigh evil, he looked round, and saw, through the grate opening on the passage, a light, that seemed to come from the stair; and, while he watched, behold a hand came through the grate, and tried to reach the bolt, which held the door within.

The poor merchant shuddered, when he saw those bony fingers stretched forth, with no weak impulse, to force back the bolt; and he started, when there came a face behind the grate, and he knew it to be the Prior's of Saint Mary's. His hand could not push back the bolt; and seeing, that the prisoner was now awake

and watchful, he called to him by name, and desired him to unfasten the chamber. The prisoner demanded who came, at that unseasonable hour, and what he wanted; on which the Prior told his name, and that he came to confess him and prepare him for his trial, on the morrow. When the merchant observed, that the hour was extraordinary for such a duty, he was answered, "it is never too late for a good work;" and was desired to open the door, without further speaking.

But the prisoner, misliking the visage of this Prior, whom he had noted, on a former occasion, and fearing some concealed mischief, still delayed to comply, saying, that for his trial he was as much prepared, as an innocent conscience could prepare him. On this, the Prior was angry, and said he came by the King's order, whose chamber he had just left, and, in his name, demanded entrance.

"If so," answered the prisoner, "I marvel the keeper is not with you. Why come you alone, and at this dead hour? I beseech you let me go on with my night's sleep, which will best prepare me for the morrow's trial."

"The King's order is sufficient for my appearance alone," said the Prior. "I require not the keeper's attendance at a confession; and, for his key, it is already in my hand; therefore, delay no longer, but draw that unlawful bolt." The merchant said again he had no confession to make, and that, even if he had ought to tell, he could tell it through the grate, and there only would he answer, this night.

"You know not," said the Prior, "the good you are refusing; let me in, and you may hear that you expect not. Why should you suppose I come to you as an enemy?"

"Father," said the prisoner, "I have

desired rest; and, in so saying, why should you suspect I take you for an enemy. I have never injured you, and am even a stranger to you; if, therefore, I ought to fear admitting you to this chamber, you best can tell why. But I crave rest; this is the reason for it, and well may I marvel you have chosen such a time wherein to visit me; and, yet more, why you come alone, without witness."

"Come nearer to the grate," said the Prior, "and I will tell you." The prisoner raised himself from his pallet and advanced. "Come nearer," said the Prior; to which the poor man, astonished at this eagerness, replied, that, where he stood, he could well hear even the lowest speech.

"Others, too, may hear. What I would say, is to yourself alone."

"And what inducement can you have to confide any thing to me—a prisoner, without help, without council, without

comfort, other than that of a good conscience? Since, then, I cannot administer to myself, what can I administer to you, that you should seek my confidence?"

"You may find, perhaps," said the Prior, "that you are neither without council nor help, if you will listen to me;" and again he bade the merchant draw nearer; on whose doing so, he asked him, if he wished for liberty? On this the prisoner smiled contemptuously.

"I hear the first matin-bell," said he; "it calls you—you had done better to be in your place than to have come hither at such an hour, to tempt me by such a question."

"I begin to think so too," answered the Prior since you are so obstinately bent against yourself; but open the door, and I will convince you I am your friend."

"You must convince me of that, before I unfasten this door."

What other arguments the Prior might use are unknown, but they answered his purpose so far, that the poor prisoner, at last, gave up his fears, and admitted him to the chamber. Having thus entered, the Prior fastened the door again, and, holding up the lamp to examine whether any one was concealed in the room, the full light fell upon his forehead, and showed a deep scar, that seemed to remain from a sword wound.

While the merchant stood observing his face, under this peculiar light, the scar suddenly engrossed his attention; and he thought he had seen the same countenance, at some former period of his life. He had little time for recollection; but he thought this was at an inn, between Tamworth and the Chase, as he was travelling with his kinsman from Worcester; the latter having landed at Milford, on his return from beyond the sea: but the

recollection was indistinct; and he checked the fear, which was beginning to return upon him.

The Prior, after his survey of the chamber, met one glance of the scrutinizing eyes, that were directed upon him, and he immediately withdrew his own; and, sitting down on the low pallet, he thus addressed his prisoner:—"Now shall you know me for your friend; for, here I tell you, that, if you wish to escape this night from the trial that threatens you, I have in my power the means of assisting you; and am ready to use them, on one condition!"

The prisoner, surprised and distrusting the motive of this offer, answered, "You said but now, that you came hither by the King's order! Is it also by his order, that you bring me this offer of escape? He has only to will my freedom! and I shall go forth from these walls without

any contrivance, or secret methods of my own."

"Yes: and then you may, without further let, or hindrance, again sound forth your accusations against an innocent man! It is on one condition only, that his Highness consents to your escape. As to your going openly forth, with his known consent, free of punishment for your accusation against the Baron de Blondeville, that cannot be, and he preserve his honour: liberty, granted to you on such terms, would be the Baron's condemnation. This you must acknowledge. There is but one way, that can secure both his honour and your safety—only one!"

"Name it!" said the merchant.

"It is, that you set your name to this paper, containing a recantation of all, of which you have accused the Baron before the King; and that you leave it

behind you ere you take your secret flight, in sure testimony of his innocence."

The prisoner, rising up with indignation, exclaimed, "Never! I was witness to the crime, of which I have accused him, and never will I cease to demand justice for it! Nor will I believe King Henry would, in this way, shelter a man, whose honour he would fear to bring to trial!"

While he said this, the countenance of the Prior darkened; and, after a short silence, he replied slowly: "I cannot doubt your knowledge of the crime; but I as little doubt the innocence of him you have accused. You err not as to the deed, but as to the criminal; and *your* crime lies in this, that you have rashly, and with unmeet confidence, charged a man with a dreadful offence, whom, even if he were guilty, you could have small

means of knowing to be so. Your obstinacy, too, in persisting in this charge, when you have found who the accused is, takes away from you all claim to mercy; and, understand from me, that, on your trial to-morrow, you are not likely to find any. At this hour, to-morrow night, if you shall be then still amongst the living, you will remember, in despair, the opportunity, now offered you and now passing away.

Scarcely had the Prior ended, when the bell of Saint Mary's sounded, and his visage altered, while he faintly uttered the latter words. He was mute awhile, and then he said, "If you have resolved to proceed with this denunciation, I must leave you: if you doubt, mercy is still open to you; but no time is to be lost—I must be gone!"

"Could I doubt, for an instant, as to the

person of the murderer," said the agitated prisoner, " I should, indeed, be infamous, in accusing the Baron de Blondeville, and equally foolish in hesitating to accept your offer; but my memory is faithful; I never can forget the countenance of him, who murdered my kinsman, in my sight."

" It is extraordinary your memory should have received so false an impression, if, indeed, you speak according to your conviction; it is extraordinary, that, considering the short opportunity you had of observing the robber's face, you should be so confident in that impression; you saw him only for a moment, and then by a torch lying on the ground. A light, so placed, might give a false appearance to any countenance." He ceased, and the merchant remained thoughtful and silent.

" It is extraordinary, too," said the Prior, " that, recollecting so clearly, the

countenance of one of the robbers, you should have no remembrance of the others."

"I saw not the faces of the others. You were present, when I related this matter to the King; can you have forgotten, that I said the other robbers were masked during the whole outrage?"

"I recollect you said so. And you say so now again? You are sure they were masked?" said the Prior.

"Yes, I am sure," replied the merchant.

"Yet is it strange, that the man, who committed the murder, should be the only man of the four, who exposed his face."

"The four! I saw but three," said Woodreeve, eagerly. He looked at the Prior, who was, for a moment, silent. "You must remember, I told the King, the assassin's *visor* fell off in the struggle with my brave kinsman."

At this close recollection of the very

manner of the deed, the prisoner was much moved; he groaned heavily, and threw himself again on the pallet, saying, "Talk no more of this cruel transaction, I beseech you; it goes to my heart." His visitor made no answer, and the merchant remained, for a short time, with his face hid in his hands, as if in an ecstasy of grief. When he raised himself and turned, he found the Prior standing close beside him, with an expression, which he did not, at the moment, understand.

"I must begone," said the intruder; "you will repent that you have neglected the opportunity; another will certainly not occur; and you deserve not that it should, since you can persist, on such slight grounds, in accusing a stranger of what would affect his life. I know the Baron de Blondeville to be innocent."

Woodreeve was struck both with the emphasis and with the tone, in which this

was uttered; it was not the usual voice of the Prior; yet did it seem the natural one, and not wholly unknown to him. Looking earnestly upon him, he said, "Who is with me?"

His visitor, turning quickly at the question, answered not the scrutiny of the merchant's eye, but scornfully asked, "Know you not the Prior of Saint Mary's?"

"I did know a Prior of St. Mary's;" said the other sadly, "you are not he. Moreover, your speech was but now changed, I knew it not for yours; not for the same I had heard a few minutes before, though it seemed not unknown to me.'

"That is strange; but your observance of my voice, seems to be about as certain as your recollection of the Baron de Blondeville's features; and I should not much marvel, if you were to denounce it as a party in the same adventure. But I must

leave you, and shall add nothing more, since you had rather remain a prisoner, with death before your eyes, than doubt the correctness of your memory, or recant from an error, when in so doing, you might save the life of yourself, or, perhaps, of an innocent man. Call not that a love of justice, which is blind vengeance in its blackest shape."

There was something in these latter words, that now struck the harassed mind of the prisoner, with a force, which had not accompanied any similar exhortation from his adviser; a dreadful possibility was once more placed before him, and the moment was passing, in which by acknowledging that possibility, he might put an end to the fearful alternative, in which he stood, of losing his own life, or taking that of another.

"What if there be one possibility," said he to himself, "out of thousands, that

I have accused an innocent person!" and he shuddered with horror.

The Prior instantly perceived the hesitation of his mind, and he waited awhile, that it might end in further doubts, which he knew would be stronger, if his now readier listener should forget them to have proceeded from his promptings, and should mistake them for his own. When he thought they had taken some hold, he threw out hints and argument to confirm his apprehensions; and this with so much success, that the merchant was no longer sufficiently confident in his own recollection, to adhere to a purpose so surrounded with danger, either to his life, or, what was truly more important, and what he always held to be more important—to his conscience. But, although this shade of distrust might influence him, to desist from a further prosecution of the Baron de Blondeville, he was not persuaded to sign

the recantation proposed to him, nor any recantation whatsoever. On this point, every suggestion made to him, touching his own security, or advantage, was vain; at this moment, he held it just possible the Baron might be innocent, and, therefore, was he willing to desist from his accusation; but he also thought it far more probable, that he was guilty, and, therefore, would he not affirm that he was innocent.

The Prior, feigning more satisfaction than he felt, as to the progress of his suggestions, said, "You think the Baron guiltless; your recantation must therefore follow, when you have had a few minutes further consideration. Else where would be the love of justice, of which you have said so much?"

"I only doubt of his guilt," said the respondent in this dispute, "and that carries me no farther than a relinquishment of the prosecution."

"But you certainly do not doubt, that this must be insufficient to satisfy his honour. He has been publicly accused, and it is necessary, that he should be as publickly cleared. It is also necessary"—here the speaker delivered himself with greater emphasis—"it is also necessary, that his accuser, if he be obstinate, should be punished for his attempt. Think you that punishment is likely to be slight? If you remain here, certain destruction awaits you; if you go away, and leave behind this recantation of your error, you will save your own life, and testify so far to the Baron's innocence, as to render a pursuit of you unnecessary to his reputation.

"I knew not," said Woodreeve, "that you were so warmly my friend, as you profess yourself to be; you seem as anxious for my welfare, after I may leave this place, as for the Baron's reputation."

The Prior liked not this remark. "I

know not," said he, "why I should be thus anxious, since you are so distrustful of my good-will, although there be mixed with my wish to save your life, a desire, that you should restore the reputation of an innocent man. I marvel you should hesitate to accept my kindness."

The merchant still refused to sign a recantation, which went so much beyond his own conviction. "My flight, without this," said he, "would afford sufficient presumption of my doubt, and even that is rather a stronger word than ought to be applied to my mere admission of a possibility."

The parties remained for a while in silence, one considering whether he should waive the recantation he had so strongly insisted upon, the other, whether he should trust himself with such a companion, even if he no longer required it. He feared some treachery in the proposal; the offer

of an escape might be made, only with a design to draw him into a virtual acknowledgment of guilty motives for his charge, the more certainly to accomplish his destruction. "Suppose I were on the outside of the castle walls," said he, "how may I proceed, when beyond them, since I have neither horse, nor friend, to expedite me?"

"You consent, then, to sign this?"

"No," replied the merchant, lifting up his head, with a resolute and indignant countenance. "If you insist on such a condition, here, I entreat you, conclude your visit, and leave me to my rest."

The Prior now yielded. "There is a place, without the town," said he, "where you may lie hidden, till the dawn, or, if you fear not to traverse the woods by night, a horse and guide are in readiness for you. I am sufficiently your friend to

help you, without insisting on further conditions."

Still, the prisoner hesitated. He knew of no previous good-will of his adviser towards him, that could account for so much preparation for his safety; he liked not to trust him, with such an opportunity to ruin him. But, while he thus feared treachery, on one hand, he saw destruction threatening him, on the other; if he trusted to the present offer, he might perish; if he awaited a doubtful contest with enemies so powerful, and so greatly inflamed by revenge, he felt little hope for his life. To declare in court, his mere admission, that the Baron might be innocent, would not be sufficient for his own release; further his conscience would not let him go, and yet it was apparent, that he should be pressed to go further, and should be treated as a criminal, if he refused; nothing would be sufficient to his own safety,

which was not so to the Baron's views; his admission would be attributed only to fear, and it was not fear in him, which his adversaries wished to prove. After he had weighed these thoughts in his mind. he told the Prior he was ready to depart.

While he yet spoke, he heard the bell of Saint Mary's strike, for the third time; the Prior heard it too; and he stood still and thoughtful. Then, starting from his mood, he said, "Your determination is, perhaps, too late: let us begone."

On being asked why he feared this, he answered, "That bell was to serve as the third signal." On being asked for what purpose it was to serve as a signal, he replied, without explaining, that it concerned the escape, adding, "Not a moment is to be lost; while we are talking, your opportunity is fleeing;" and he arose and unlocked the chamber-door.

"Are you sure of the keeper?" said

Woodreeve, "and how are we to pass the castle gates?"

"There is no time for answers; follow in silence." They left the chamber; a light was burning on the head of the stair, which the Prior, as he descended, took up in his hand. The merchant perceived no one on the stair, save his conductor; but he looked fearfully at every door-way he passed, expecting each moment, to see some one on the watch, ready to start out upon him.

Having descended two flights only, the Prior turned into a chamber on the left, making sign for the merchant to follow; who, fearing he was not leading him forth of the tower, stood still on the stair, and pointed downward, as though he would go that way only. But, the Prior still beckoning, and retiring with the light, he could not but follow into what appeared to be a state-room of this tower, and which

did in truth belong to the constable of the castle, though not then used by him. Woodreeve marvelled, wherefore he was led to this chamber, which, for height and greatness, nearly equalled any at Kenilworth, and which, though scant of furniture, was yet hung with ancient arras, that fell from under the high windows down to the very floor.

The Prior again beckoning him, he passed on, without inquiring, fearing lest the sound of his voice might call forth some one, who should have been on watch. This chamber led into another, separated, as was a third, by a wall, which, though lofty, did not reach the roof, except by a row of round arches, that appeared above the arras, and rose to a vast height, making the whole extent of these three large chambers visible on high, like unto the aisle-roof of a church, though the partition walls concealed it below.

On the top of these walls, stood many figures of armour, beneath the arches and piles of arms, which none could reach, save those acquainted with the secret ways of the chambers. These shapes exhibited every device of harness known—of plain steel, of brass, or coat of mail; with helms and visors of divers sorts; some to lie flat before the face, leaving only an opening for the eyes above; others hiding the eyes, yet allowing sight and the passage of breath through the iron bars of the projecting visor, and some with beaver down, as if there were a visage behind too ghastly to be exposed. These were the state rooms of the great tower, or keep of Cæsar; but although assigned as the habitation of the Constable, they were never used by him, except in time of siege, they were so cold and comfortless. Hung they were with like arras from the line of the windows and arches, down to the

floor, but they showed little sign of the living beside.

The merchant, coming to the third chamber and seeing no sign of an outlet beyond, liked it not; and, halting at the door, made signal for the Prior to return; but he, waving the lamp over his head, noticed this only by a gesture to come on. As he did so, his companion could almost have believed some evil sprite was before him, so dark and strange he looked under that gloomy light. When the Prior had reached the end of this chamber, he stood still, till Woodreeve came up; and then, checking all further question, he put the lamp into his hand, and, lifting up the arras, unfastened a door behind it; beyond which appeared an arch made in the solid wall, of twelve or fourteen feet thickness.

Several steps led up to a stone landing-place and to a loop beyond; where, in

time of siege, two archers could stand, and shoot forth their arrows, unseen of the enemy without. And there were many of the like in these chambers; but the arras hid them from those, who might be guests.

Woodreeve, marvelling why the Prior had led him thither, looked forward into the depth of this arch; and there saw, by the dim light, a figure stand: which, for aught that then appeared, might be a mere bow-man, ready to shoot; till the Prior, snatching the lamp from the merchant, who had no power either to resist, or to flee, held it forward at arm's length, and it gleamed upon the armour of one, who seemed appointed like a knight.

Instantly, the lamp shook in the hand of the Prior, and Woodreeve wondered not less to see his visage change to deadly pale, than at the shape before him, till its harness of a knight seemed to remind him

of his dead kinsman. The Prior, recovering from his ecstasy, said, "'Tis but the armour of the Lord Constable, which used to stand in this recess; 'tis strange I should have forgotten this: come on, you have nothing to fear!"

But the merchant thought not so; and liked not being brought hither, whence, as it seemed, they could go no further; but in this he was mistaken. A key having been applied by his conductor to a door in the side of the arch-way, it opened upon a passage, made in the thickness of the wall, which led to many secret places of this tower, and elsewhere, unknown to few, save the Lord Constable and the wardoup: how the Prior came to be acquainted with it, may appear hereafter.

The wind, that poured through this door, had extinguished the lamp, had not Woodreeve let fall the arras; and, when he found himself inclosed in this arch,

he lamented his attempt; and still more when he saw the Prior standing darkly, at the foot of a narrow staircase, looking up it, and beckoning him to come on. His heart failed him, and he demanded whither he was to be led, saying he would go no further, till he should receive an answer to that question. The Prior spoke in a low voice, as if he feared to be heard, a precaution, which seemed to be unnecessary here, and said, "Within the thickness of these walls, there are galleries, which lead to many points; you will presently find yourself at the foot of the tower."

"How can that be," said his companion, "when the stairs do not descend, but rise?"

"Come on, and you shall see; but first let me secure this door." The Prior stepped back; and, as he locked it, hung the key to his girdle. As he flung back his weeds

to do this, Woodreeve thought he saw the glitter of steel within. Other keys might hang there; but he almost thought he saw a poinard, and he doubted whether it were safer to attempt going back to his prison, or to proceed, without betraying his suspicions. His conductor left him little time to meditate; for, taking again the lamp, he went up the stair, bidding him tread lightly, and speak not.

It was a short flight of steps, ending in a narrow passage, where once and again a loop supplied the place of windows. Now, there were within these walls of the grand story, galleries, that ran round the chambers, below the windows, which were made for secret communication to distant parts of the castle; and, for means of security and escape, in times of siege; some led up to the battlements; others down to the donjon and to subterraneous avenues; but whither these went finally there were

few that could tell. The Prior was acquainted with them all, and, when the King's court was not at Kenilworth, he could, had he been rebelliously inclined, have surprized the ten knights, who kept garrison here, and have delivered the castle unto an enemy. But his treachery took not so wide a compass.

Woodreeve followed through this gallery, in watchful silence, and, at the end of it, saw the Prior make halt, where the wall fell into a recess, as if a turret were at that corner of this tower. On coming up, he perceived in the floor a large opening, or well, such as is found in the strong holds of many castles, and is used, when great balls of solid stone or balistas, catapultas, and other engines of war are to be drawn up, for defence, during the siege.

The Prior bent over it with the lamp, eyeing the depth; and, while Woodreeve did the same, he saw, far down within, a

flash of light, which showed him a high and narrow arch at the bottom. A stronger flash made him look up to the lamp his conductor held, supposing it might have come from that; but his eyes settled not on the lamp, but on the looks of the Prior, which were fixed in dark watchfulness; and again the countenance struck him as having been seen by him, under other circumstances than any, which had lately occurred at Kenilworth.

He stepped hastily back from the opening; his conductor stepped back also; and he heard, at the same moment, a voice say, "Wardour, mind the hour!"

The merchant's heart sunk at the sound, which seemed to him the same he had heard, this night before, in his prison, and he looked again at the Prior; but his lips were motionless; and, when he had made a sign for silence, and had beckoned the merchant forward, he turned quickly

this angle of the tower into a gallery like that they had left. It ended in another turret, but here appeared a narrow stair, leading, on one hand, up to the battlement, and, on the other, descending; it was so narrow as to admit only one in front, and so steeply winding, that he, who followed, could hardly keep in view him, who went before.

It ended in a small chamber, where the Prior again made a stand, and, giving the lamp to his companion, he drew the bolts of a strong oaken door, so thickly barred and studded with iron, that the weight of it could hardly have been moved by the Prior alone. Here the spirits of Woodreeve revived; for, this seemed by its strength to be a door of outer defence, and he willingly assisted to force it back. His disappointment was great, when he perceived, that it opened only on a straight and steep flight of steps. Again, he ques-

tioned his conductor, who, once more, bade him be patient. The steps led to another door, which opened to a covered gallery, or passage, judged by the merchant to pass under the castle-foss, and, when they came to a third strong door, and ascended a short flight of steps, he doubted not the Prior was leading him forth of a salley-port, beyond the ditch.

At the top of these steps, a fourth door appeared; this was so stoutly fastened with bolts and bars, that together they could scarce undo them. And sorely was Woodreeve daunted, when, instead of finding it opening to liberty and fresh air, he saw beyond it only a narrow and dismal chamber, more like to a prison than even that he had left. His loud remonstrances alarmed the Prior, who again besought him, as he wished for freedom, to be circumspect and silent.

"We have passed," said he, "along the

castle wall, through that covered gallery, which leads from the Constable's chambers to the gate of entrance into the bass-court, and may be within hearing of the wardours. Four knights below keep castle guard, to night, within the great portal, the King being here, at Kenilworth. You have, perchance, already betrayed yourself; but wait here, while I go on and examine, whether the way be clear; if you hear me speaking loud, retire into the covered passage, and bar the iron door; but be not heard the while; if all be still, stay here, till I return."

Woodreeve eagerly desired to follow, his heart misgiving him of treachery, and because also, that he even shuddered at the thought of being left alone in this dreary place, without a light; for the only lamp they carried the Prior must take to light his own steps. But his conductor objected, that, their way now lying near the

ground, it was unsafe for them to go further together, till he should have made sure, that the wardours were aloof. To this the merchant remarked with some surprize, that this did not agree with the assurance he had given him, that he had safe means of escape, for, it now appeared that, although their passage lay so near to where the wardours, or others watched, it seemed not that he had secured the good-will of any one to help them. A keen sarcastic smile was on the countenance of the Prior, which, certain, the poor merchant did not read aright.

"If you have deceived me already, how can I resolve to proceed further with you? you said you had prepared a horse and guide, without the walls."

"Hush, " said the Prior, " you are delivering us both to destruction; speak not; be confident and patient; you will soon have reason to find that your distrust has been folly. I will return immediately, un-

less I am seen. If you hear my voice, remember the retreat, that remains for you, and that you secure the door without noise; I shall find means of extricating you another way. You know you are not to expect me to call to you; it will be sufficient if you hear me speaking loudly."

Having said this, he laid his finger on his lips, and then, shading the lamp by his garment, left the chamber by a narrow passage, and was speedily out of sight. Woodreeve, awed by the darkness of this lone spot, tried, notwithstanding the injunction he had received, to follow his steps; but no sound of them could he hear; a little ray from the lamp alone giving him a faint glimpse through that passage into a lofty chamber, where he just discovered the light vanishing through a distant doorway, with the Prior's shadow beside it. And here Woodreeve made a halt, lest he should not be able, in this darkness, to

find his way back to the covered passage, should the signal for retreat be sounded, and lest his following steps should be heard of the Prior, who his-self moved so stilly, as though he had meant to observe whether he was followed, or not.

The merchant listened attentively, but heard no sound: he watched a considerable while on this spot, without perceiving any sign of the Prior's return. His heart again failed him, and again he trusted, that he, who was guiltless of any crime, and whom pity for a murdered kinsman had exposed to this danger, would not be left to be destroyed by any artifice of man. Still the Prior did not return, nor was his voice heard in any direction. Now, taking his way towards the door, through which he had seen him depart, he determined to know the worst, and either to make one desperate effort to escape, or resign himself into the hands of any guard he cou'-

find. The chamber was so spacious, that hardly could he find his way through it, but that, as he advanced, he perceived a glimmering of light, which led him to the very door, where his conductor had disappeared. Here he saw the rays shoot athwart another room, through the arch of an opposite door. Listening and hearing no sound, he advanced cautiously, that he might observe, without entering that further chamber, what was passing within it.

It was a large and lofty chamber, having no window, save one, but many loops in the walls, which were dimly seen by the slanting light from a lamp near the high roof. On the opposite side, were large grooves and pullies of extraordinary strength, such as he had never seen before, and could not now comprehend the use of; but, in the present temper of his mind, he readily assigned for them some terrible purpose; in which conjecture he was

not mistaken. Near them were a row of large iron spikes and many bars, that covered the wall to a great height; and he then understood this to be the port-cullis room. But what surprized him was, to see light springing up through the floor, at regular distances, by small apertures: for, he knew not that there were used the machicollations, for pouring down melted lead and hot sand on the heads of enemies, who might have forced the first gates, or even the port-cullis itself; and that this glimmering came from the watch-lights of the guard in the portal beneath. Still, he neither saw, nor heard, any living person in this chamber; till, venturing a little within the door, he observed, at the farther end, a torch, gleaming through a passage, and the Prior himself standing in the archway, between two men, who lay along on stone benches in the wall.

He bent over one for awhile, and then over the other, as if communicating some-

thing to them; and Woodreeve, suspecting that he was betrayed to those, who would not scruple to dispatch him, stood rooted by terror to the spot, and saw the Prior advance alone towards the door, where he watched. He was presently observed of him, and the looks of his conductor, on discovering him, seemed to express dismay; but this soon passed from them, and, putting himself back, within the door, he said, "All is right; follow me through that passage; but step lightly and speak not, for your life."

"For my life," answered the merchant, imprudently, "will I not follow you thither, where two men are lying in wait; I have seen them."

"Then you have seen the wardours of this cullis-chamber in their niches, keeping guard; and good guard will they keep; they will not wake of one while; their liquor has been such as I wished."

This seemed so probable an explanation,

that Woodreeve received it for truth; yet was he surprized, that so great preparation had been made for his escape, and he asked how it were possible to be certain this sleep was not feigned, and who had prepared their drink. The Prior answered, with sarcastic smile, "Four knights do service in the portal below; there is one among them, who has spared not to make these inferior wardours merry."

He then checked further question, saying, "Come, let us pass; time speeds; this moment we may use, the next, perhaps, we may not." Without more words, the merchant followed him through the portcullis-chamber, and, drawing nigh the place of guard, did, in trowth, perceive the two wardours fast asleep in the niches, where they usually kept watch. But, hardly had he entered the gate-way, when one of them began to move himself on

the bench, and cried out, "Down with the port-cullis, they are coming over the bridge;" and, stretching forth his arm, he had nigh knocked the lamp from the Prior's hand, and the merchant, as he passed, was touched.

They stayed not to see whether he had waked himself, but, turning into a little projection of the passage, went down a round stair. And now approached the greatest danger of discovery; for, this led down into a room that opened under the great portal, where the wardours of that place usually sat. There were stone seats within the wall appointed for them, where they watched out the night in all seasons, save of the bleakest weather of winter, and then they sat by fire in the guard-chamber, which was in the opposite tower opening under the gate-way. But those, who, this night, kept castle-guard under the great portal, being there on knight's

service and unused, save for a certain season, to be from their beds, at this time, minded not to watch within the niches; and, the draw-bridge being securely up, they sat in that guard-room, there beguiling the time with dice, or they contented themselves with now and then a turn under the great arch, to see that others did their duty; and then reposed themselves.

When the merchant saw whither that stair led, he asked how they were to pass, unseen, through the portal, where the wardours watched, and received for answer, they were not to go out to that portal, secured by gates, as well as by guards and by the raised draw-bridge, but by a secret way in the tower-room below. Now, hardly had the Prior spoken, when, on coming near to the bottom stair, he checked his steps, and stood still and watchful; for, he saw the door of that room standing

ajar, which he had reason to hope would have been shut and even fastened at this hour; and, presently after, a wardour was seen passing there, by a light hanging in the arch-way.

Darkening his lamp with his garment, he stood, fearing to venture forward, lest his steps should discover him, ere he could get through that room. He also feared, that the noise of raising the trap, by which he would depart, must be heard, even if he should get safely through the room. Before the passing of many minutes, the Knight, watching there, began to sing an old Norman song, the burden of which was taken up in chorus by his comrades dicing in the guard-room beyond, making a kind of hoarse music, which was soon joined by the sound of a single clarion, repeating a few notes in an under tone, both solemn and terrific to the poor merchant, who thought it was some signal of alarm.

But his conductor, who knew it to be only a sign for changing the guard at some post without the gates, took courage at the noise, and, boldly stepping forward, shut the door that led to the portal, and drew the gate within. Yet, ere he could find the trap, the Knight, who had heard a bolt drawn, was calling and then striking heavily at the door. Finding no answer, he ordered a clarion to be sounded in the portal for a call to the wardours, of the port-cullis chamber above, and to gather those below to inquire into this matter.

And now was Woodreeve most fearful, lest those sleeping wardours above should by these loud soundings be roused from their trance: and hardly could he hold the lamp to the ground, while the Prior searched for the trap, which lay hid in the corner; there, having found a grated opening on the floor, Woodreeve pointed that

out for the trap, little guessing he stood over the Castle dungeon, where condemned criminals were kept, and where he might yet be laid. It was of great depth, and what little and glimmering light it ever had was received through this opening, by which also food was let down to the wretched prisoner.

Undismayed by the noise without, now that he had secured the door, the Prior continued to search coolly for the trap, knowing, perchance, better than his companion, that the wardours would not soon wake, and that amongst the knights below, was one, who was enough the friend of the Baron de Blondeville and his cause to manage his unthinking comrades, till they should be willing to suppose the alarm had proceeded from some mistaken cause. Had the merchant been also aware of this, he might have thought himself safe; yet might he have erred, when thus secure.

and have found that his worst enemy stood close beside him.

The Prior having, at length, found the trap, applied the key, and, with his companion's aid, lifted the door. Beneath, appeared a steep and narrow stair, and now again, when Woodreeve, after such long toil and so many changes of anxiety, looked down into this dark abyss, his distrust of his companion returned with new force; he pointed to the fearful descent, and urged, that, even if it could lead them without the walls, they must be unable to get over the foss, which was broad and full of deep water. A thundering sound upon the portal door and a loud blast of the clarion silenced this remonstrance, and prevented the Prior's reply. He thought the sleep of the wardours above must needs be the sleep of death, if it fled not at the noise: so thought some under the archway,

and they redoubled their blows and their hallooings; but as yet to no purpose.

The Prior the while, having found it no very difficult matter to thrust, as it were, his harassed companion down the opening, lowered and secured the trap and followed down the steps. As Woodreeve now stood with the lamp, at the bottom of them, the light it cast upward to the Prior gave a ghastly hue to his visage, which again brought back his former faint recollection of having seen him, at some other period, and under circumstances of danger. It was by such an upward, darting light, that he had seen the murderer of his kinsman, at the moment when the visor fell off; and he now almost thought he saw before him that very murderer.

The suspicion was far from being strong, but the mixed expression of terror and firmness, with which he fixed his eyes upon him, did not escape the Prior. With

less firmness than usual, he almost started and threw a keen and frowning glance upon his companion. Dark and thronging thoughts cast their shadows upon his countenance. But recovering, by degrees, his usual aspect, he stood awhile at the foot of the stair, listening for the sound above. It had ceased, and all within and without this gloomy vault, was still.

He knew not, whether to understand, that the noise had brought down the wardours from their sleep, and that the portal was opened, or that the Baron's friend, who watched there with the rest, had succeeded in quieting their suspicions. The thickness of the trap, and the depth of the vault, in which he stood, would prevent him from hearing their footsteps, even if they were trampling over his head; but should this be so, and should those knights, who were strangers to the secret ways of the castle, have discovered the trap-door,

he trusted to the strength of its inward fastenings for a sufficient time of security. Woodreeve stood, the while, silent from terror and expectation, and hardly did he know whether it were better for him to be o'ertaken by those above, or to proceed with his murky conductor. "What, if he has brought me into the depth of this vault only to destroy me?" thought he. Then he considered, that hardly would any one, after the alarm which had been given above, hazard himself by so atrocious a deed, and his spirits, in some deal, returned.

But he demanded again, and with more resolute tone, whither they were going, and was answered, "To a sally-port."

But how are we to pass the ditch? Is there a boat then waiting for us?"

"Come on," answered the Prior, sharply.

Woodreeve followed, without further

question, yet misliked he the manner of his conductor more than ever. Nor had he failed to observe, that, unless at intervals, when reproof was to be conveyed, or hope raised, no eyes met his, so bent were those of the Prior towards the ground. They passed on through other vaults, and, whether it were the bad air there, or apprehension of what might follow, Woodreeve felt himself so faint, that hardly could he drag his steps along. Soon they came to a round chamber, whose roof, supported by a central pillar, rose in vaultings, that terminated in corbeils of lions' heads, upon a cornice of noble simplicity. The place seemed intended for a hall of some sort, but the merchant, who looked round it with surprise, could perceive no windows; there were two arched doors opposite to each other, and to one of these the Prior led. Having gone up a few steps, he undrew the strong fastenings, and un-

closed it, Woodreeve hastily following him, for he once more felt the fresh air breathe upon his face. His conductor pressed forward, but suddenly checked himself, and drew back; he had nearly fallen into the foss below.

"I have mistaken the way," said he, this is a sally-port long disused, and the steps from it are removed."

He had in trowth mistaken this for a sally-port, that had led under the rampart, and the castle ditch; but, this entrance having been considered as an inlet dangerous in times of siege, the steps had been taken down, and the door strongly secured. For the hall, it had once been a principal entrance to a tower on the walls, although it lay under a lofty flight of covered steps, that led obliquely to a larger portal, guarded by strong doors, one of which was of iron.

Woodreeve, breathing awhile the fresh

air from without, recovered strength and courage; he almost blamed himself for his want of patience, and for having failed to allow, that an escape from a castle so spacious as this of Kenilworth, and so fully occupied and inhabited, as it now was, could not be made, except by many devious and tedious ways. But he did not long enjoy this free air; the Prior suddenly closed the door, made the bars fast, and then, turning away, began to examine the wall, at a little distance, where he applied a key to a door, not seen till the lamp was held close to it; thence a steep stair descended, as if into another vault. They stepped upon it, and the Prior bade Woodreeve go first, while he locked the door; but here again distrust returned to the still baffled prisoner, for he perceived that this door was greatly different from that of the sally-port; so much so that he marvelled how one could be mis-

taken for the other; and he stopped, fearful of what might follow.

Yet had no apparent purpose been answered if the error were wilful; and, if the Prior had an ill-meaning, so far as to intend him bodily harm, in their lonely track, he seemed to have missed an opportunity fitted for his purpose, since it would have been easy to push him into the dark moat below. This thought encouraged him now to proceed; but he would not have been so soon consoled, had he known as much as his conductor knew. He asked, however, whither this second flight would lead them, and was answered, "Beyond the walls, where you shall soon find yourself at liberty; if you like not to proceed, return and deliver yourself up to justice."

The merchant followed down a very long flight of steps, ending in a passage, which he supposed lay under the foss.

Here the air was so changed by an unwholesome vapour, that it was painful to breathe it; and the lamp burned so dimly, at times, that he feared it would expire. The Prior often stopped to nurse the flame, and once, as he lifted the lamp high, and it revived, his garment flew back, and Woodreeve now saw, beyond all possibility of doubt, a dagger at his girdle.

His eyes were fixed upon it, till his conductor saw that he observed it; and then, laying his hand upon the hilt, he said, "In times like these, every one should be somewhat armed."

But now another object had seized the attention of the merchant, and he stood in horror. In drawing forth the dagger, his companion had turned aside his vesture, and, behold! a chain of gold hung about his neck, which from its ponderous but highly wrought ornaments, Woodreeve in-

stantly thought was the very chain worn by his kinsman, at the time of his death, and he doubted not, that in the Prior he saw one of his assassins. A sort of amulet box was suspended to the chain, but of that he had no recollection.

At this conviction, he lost all presence of mind, so that he foresaw not how much he might hasten his peril, and lessen his chance, if there were any, of finally avoiding it, in betraying his thoughts to the Prior, whose revenge might be accomplished in such a place, without danger, as it appeared, from any human means of discovery.

He seized the lamp, and, holding it close to the chain, cried out, "It is the same—there are the very links, that shape —the initials of his name."

"Of whose name?" said the Prior eagerly, and as he spoke, Woodreeve recollect-

ed the voice of the very robber, to whom he had delivered up his own treasure. The Prior, still without having changed his voice, repeated the question.

"'Of my unfortunate kinsman," answered Woodreeve; "I now know you."

Instantly, the discovered ruffian, without one word, drew the dagger from the imperfect grasp, which Woodreeve had of it; and upraised his hand with a fierce and deadly intention, but the blow descended not; the poignard fell from his hand, and his eyes seemed fixed upon some object beyond.

The poor merchant, who, for an instant, had been motionless and confounded with terror, seeing this, gathered courage, and turned to discover what held his enemy in this trance; but nothing could he perceive, save the dusky avenue. Then, losing not another moment, he fled, with the

lamp, along that unknown way; but he had neglected to seize the dagger, which had fallen on the ground, and might easily have been made a weapon for himself.

He followed the avenue, till his breath failed, and he was compelled to stop; but, soon thinking he heard steps behind him, he again went on, and, flying for very life, hope and fear supplied him with strength. He had now gone a great length of way, without having discovered any thing like an outlet, and he rested again for breath, and to revive his failing lamp. He listened, and, though he heard no footsteps in pursuit, he remembered the soundless steps, with which his treacherous conductor had, this night, passed along several chambers, and he was not convinced, that he was distant, though unheard. The intenseness, with which he listened for any remote, or lone sound, seemed to sharpen

his sense of hearing, like as the seaman's sight discovers things so small and distant, as are unseen of others.

'Thus, now while Woodreeve listened, he thought he heard—not footsteps, but, a little strain of music so faint and fleeting it was more like the moonlight shadow of a fleecy cloud, that glides along the hills, and fades ere you can say it is, than any certain truth. It served, however, at first, to revive his hopes; he judged it came from without the castle walls; but then perhaps, from soldiers on their watch, and, if so, his deliverance could not be nigh. Still, as his only hope lay that way, he hastened forward, and presently he again thought he heard music. He stopped and no longer doubted this; the sound was nearer, and he gradually distinguished a faint, solemn swell of voices and instruments. As he advanced, they sunk and were lost awhile; and then a high and

long continued strain of many mingling voices was heard. Soon after, it sunk away, at a distance, and he heard it no more.

But now he fancied steps were coming behind him, and, quickening his own, he came to a bend of the avenue, and espied a door, which seemed to close its dreary length. Three massive bars secured it, but there was also a lock. While he stood before it, and looked back on the long sloping avenue, almost as far as his lifted lamp could throw its blunted rays, he heard no sound of either step, or breath, from within, or from without that door; nor saw the Prior advancing through that dim way behind him.

The bolts gave way to Woodreeve's returned strength, and even the lock did not long resist. Already, he thought he felt the fresh air from without the castle walls; but, opening the door, he stepped

not out upon a platform of grass, or under the boughs of the free forest; he stepped upon a little winding stair, that went up a turret, as he verily believed, of another tower, some out-post of the castle. At this, his heart sunk nigh to fainting; for how should he escape detection from those, who guarded it, and whose voices he now thought he heard singing, in dreary chorus, on their night-watch.

Having considered, a moment, to little purpose, for he had no choice but to go on, he went up the stair, and came to another door. He listened for awhile, but all within was still, and he undrew the bolt that held it, and would have stepped forward, but was baffled by what he thought a curtain, that hung before it. In this he deceived himself. It was the tapestry of a chamber. Perceiving this, he stopped again, before he lifted it, to consider how best he might disclose himself, if any one

were within; but, all being silent, he ventured to lift the arras, and found himself in a great arched chamber. A lamp was burning near a reading-desk; but no person appeared, and he looked round, with a mixture of terror and curiosity, still holding up the arras, with one hand, and with the other his lamp, to survey the limits of the room; and he still kept one foot on the threshold-step, as ready to retreat, on the first alarm.

At length, perceiving that he was indeed alone in this chamber, he let the hangings drop, and ventured forward, in search of an outlet, through which to escape; but he saw none. The walls were covered with tapestry, which concealed whatsoever doors might be within them, and presented in colours various good deeds. A large oriel-window of fretted stone-work rose in sharp arches, closed with glass, stained in a mosaic of divers

rich colours, like unto those in the great church of the city of Cologne in Germany. This window showed also the emblazoned arms of Geoffrey de Clinton, with many a golden rule in scrowl-work and labels on the glass.

All this Woodreeve espied, while, with his lamp in hand, he searched around for some outlet, to depart by. It seemeth not expedient to set down here all the objects he saw in this chamber; suffice it to say it was an oratory, and the histories on the tapestry and all the garniture were such as are meet for such a place. On a table lay divers folios well bossed with silver; among them was Matthew of Westminster and the Golden Legend. An arm-chair, with purple cushions, stood by the reading-desk, on which lay open a copy of the venerable Bede, and a Missal beside it, freshly illuminated.

At all he saw his mind misgave him,

that this was some chamber, not of the castle, but of the Priory; and, if so, whither could he turn, to flee from destruction. His eye again glancing round the walls, he observed a part of the tapestry inclosed in a kind of frame-work, different from any other part of the arras; and, hoping there might be a door behind this, he was advancing towards it, when he heard a rustling sound in another part of the chamber; and, turning, beheld the arras lifted, and the Prior himself standing in the same arch, through which he had entered.

His countenance was livid and malicious, and he held in his hand the dagger he had dropped in the avenue.

Hardly did Woodreeve cast a look behind him; but, rushing towards that frame-work, he found it held a door, which opened upon a vaulted passage of the Priory, ending in a cloister. As he fled,

he turned to see whether his pursuer advanced, and observed him standing at the great door of the chamber, making sign for his return; as if, after having let that dagger and that murderer's look be seen, it were possible to lure him back again.

It was Woodreeve's aim, should he be unable to get out of the monastery, to take refuge at the altar; and, with this intent, he proceeded hastily along the cloister, which opened, as he expected, into the chapel; and thence he soon heard the sound of voices and instruments; for the monks were now chanting the last matin, and he recollected the strain he had heard in the avenue. But, ere he could reach sanctuary, the Prior's steps were heard, along the cloister, and his voice calling loudly for help, and saying his life was in danger from a prisoner escaped of the castle; and, commanding, that they should stop him, ere he reached

shelter. The monks, engaged as they were, at this hour, in service, heard not the alarm; till a lay brother, coming forth of the dormitory, raised a cry, which brought out from their cells a few sick brothers, who now joined in the cry, which those at matins presently heard.

Woodreeve, however, pursued his course; and, opening a folding-door at the end of the cloister, found himself in the chancel, and gained the sanctuary, ere his pursuers reached him, or the amazed brethren there could understand they were to stop his way.

By this time the service had ceased, and all was confusion; the Prior pressing forward to seize the poor merchant, even at the altar-steps; and the monks flocking round him, to prevent sacrilege, and to learn the motive for his attempting to commit it. Scarcely was he kept back by the monks from offering violence to

Woodreeve, who was still breathless and fainting, from the thought of peril so hardly escaped, though he turned, and in some sort, faced his enemy.

But, before he was calm enough to speak, the Prior began his say: he asserted, that, while he was sitting in the great chamber, studying, a secret door of the room opened, and he saw this stranger enter. He knew him to be the man imprisoned in the castle, for having falsely accused the Baron de Blondeville, and whose trial for unlawful arts of magic, designed to delude the eyes and minds of the whole court, by a false presentment of the crime imputed to the Baron, and thereby to prejudice the King against him, to his utter ruin, was shortly to come on in the castle-hall. How he had escaped from prison he knew not, nor how he had reached the Priory; where, perchance, he had come undesignedly. On perceiving

him quietly sitting at his reading-desk, the prisoner, possessed either by despair, or by desire of vengeance, for the part he had taken against him in the King's presence, drew forth a dagger; and, having vainly made a blow at him, fled, as they had witnessed: "And here behold the instrument of his intended crime," said the Prior, "turned aside from my breast by my own hand. I found it on the floor of my chamber." And he held up the poinard.

Astonished and confounded by these audacious falsehoods, Woodreeve stood aghast, and his very looks would have condemned him, with the greater part of the brotherhood, could they even have questioned the truth of their Prior; who, however, was little loved amongst them. With one voice they cried out against the stranger, so that he almost gave himself up for lost; but, when his enemy said, that no

place ought to protect such a criminal, they all at once stood up against violation of sanctuary, as became them; and marvelled, that he showed so little reverence for so high a privilege. Then the Prior, forgetful of what became his office, said that his life was yet in danger, unless the prisoner could be dislodged from the monastery; for, although the law of sanctuary could protect him, it could not restrain him; and, as the doors of the church could not be locked, he might come forth, at some convenient hour; and not only escape from the monastery, but, on his way, accomplish the very crime he had meditated.

The monks made answer, that the doors of the church should be watched, but that they never could consent to afford a precedent for violation of sanctuary; and much they were astonished, that their superior his-self, who ought to be the first

to maintain this right, should wish to renounce it. But they excused him, seeing his terror of the evil he had just escaped. Then, the Prior perceiving he was betraying his own cause, and turning those against it, of whose good-will he should hereafter have much need, gave up that point, but threatened sentence of exclusion against any one of the community, who should relieve the stranger's hunger. And thus was he nearly condemned to a lingering death more miserable than any, which the common law of the land could have pronounced against him, since it was improbable, that any of the villagers should venture to brave the anger of the Prior.

Adversity had now well nigh persuaded Woodreeve, that, however just his cause, it would avail him nothing, where the criminal had such powerful support; and he forbore, at this time, to increase his difficulties, by accusing the Prior as an

accomplice of the Baron de Blondeville. He spoke only to make a solemn denial of the charge against himself, adding, that, if the brethren would send to the castle for a guard, he would instantly relinquish the privilege of sanctuary, and deliver himself up to the King's officers, but to no other. This pleased not his enemy, who dreaded the tale he might unfold; and, however strange that might appear and hard to be believed, he knew, that in those lawless times, there had been instances of rapine, committed by wicked intruders like himself into the fold, and, therefore might some parts of the history be not wholly discredited; the more especially as the Lord Archbishop seemed to be not wholly his friend. So, he resolved to take his cause into his own hands, and to attempt that by poison, which he had failed to perpetrate by steel, when the merchant, as has been related,

had imprudently made a charge against him in so lonely a place.

For, it is not to be guessed, that the Prior, in leading him forth from prison, had, at first, any other motive than to turn him loose and let him make his way to a distant part of the country, where he would be so well contented by having saved his life, as never again to hazard it, by endangering that of the Baron. However this might be, he now, in his folly and wickedness, as wickedness leads on to wickedness, and blinds its followers, judged it necessary for his own life, that the merchant should perish, and that, before he could have an opportunity of communicating with the King's officers. But to accomplish this it would be necessary to practise somewhat of the cunning dexterity, which with him supplied the place of wisdom, and which he was well content to mistake for it.

He, therefore, feigned to relax somewhat of his severity; and, saying the criminal should be allowed bread and water, while he remained in sanctuary, was so departing. But Woodreeve, now remembering the golden chain, worn by the Prior, and considering how helping it must be to his own cause to have that matter known, which might never be, if not now, wished to devise some means of making him show it to the brethren, before he had taken the precaution of laying it aside, if indeed he had not already done so. Yet, to mention this chain, without putting him on his guard to conceal it, were not possible. That was however done for him, which he had not the art to compass.

When the Prior was departing from the Church, Woodreeve, again appealing to the brethren, bade them bear witness, that he utterly and solemnly denied

all attempt or intention, to commit the crime now alleged against him, and that he could, at a proper time and place, unravel the mystery of his appearance there; "Look at me, who am scarcely of middle age," said he, "and at the Prior, who, though large, is past his prime, and say, whether, if I had attempted his life, his arm alone could have withstood me."

"I say not, that I escaped by my own strength," replied the Prior, "I wear a charm, which protects me against evil sprites, whether instigating human beings, or acting as shadows."

"If so," said Woodreeve, "why do you fear me, that you, but now, refused to grant me sanctuary, lest I should step forth from this place, and aim at your life. It cannot be credited; you have no such charm."

"You are a deceiver," said the Prior; "here is your falsehood proved," and he

drew forth the amulet, suspended by the chain, but, in an instant, withdrew it, perceiving whither fear and anger were leading him. On seeing again this memorial of his dead kinsman, Woodreeve was so much disturbed, that he had almost slipped off the place of sanctuary, as he reached towards it.

But, checking his steps, he cried out, "Wretch, whence had you that chain? Would it had been annexed to any real charm of defence, when my poor kinsman wore it in the forest of Ardenn! He would now, perchance, be alive to claim it."

The brethren looked on Woodreeve, with surprize and displeasure, while no one, save the Prior, understood fully those words; and his countenance, nathless all his art and boldness, fell when he heard them. "Venerable brethren," continued

the merchant, "mark well that chain; for hereafter it may unfold a tale which ye guess not off."

Upon this so pressing a call, they thronged round their superior, entreating, indeed, to see the amulet, but wishing chiefly to see the chain attached to it; and the Prior, who saw their motive beneath their pretence, was aware, that he could not resist them, without giving irremediable strength to their suspicions.

As they looked on it, Woodreeve said, "You will observe, above what he calls a charm, three golden letters, being part of the chain itself, and also three jewels, the middle one of great value; the others are rubies."

The monks then ventured to examine it further, and found it was as he said.

"In the clasp of that chain," said the merchant, "is a painting, the likeness of a noble lady, my unfortunate kinsman's

wife; it was drawn by a Florentine, a famous illuminator."

"We see nothing of that," answered the brethren. "There is no such thing."

While the Prior now exclaimed eagerly, "Mark his falsehood."

But Woodreeve, addressing himself to the brethren, told them there was a secret spring; and, instructing them how to find it, said they would then behold a fair and unhappy lady. They did as he directed, when, a golden plate of that noble clasp flying up, they beheld, not the portrait of a lady, but that of a knight in armour, whose look was mild and full of thoughtful sadness. On seeing this, they cried, that he knew not the chain; for that it showed only the semblance of a knight. Hearing this, the merchant stretched forth his hand impatiently, and descended two steps of the sanctuary to examine the portrait, ere he well knew what he was doing.

Then he entreated them, that they would allow him to see it; for, it was surely the likeness of his deceased friend; but they all assented to the Prior, that it must not be so entrusted.

At last, however, two of them yielded so far to his loud and earnest entreaties, that they held up to him the picture, beyond his reach, but where he could yet distinguish the features by the strong light of the tapers. On viewing that well-known countenance, tears stood in his eyes, and his looks alone might have convinced many, he had indeed spoken the truth, touching that chain, though he his-self was amazed by the portrait, having never seen it before. The Prior failed not to make his advantage of this unexpected circumstance; but, while he was yet triumphing, the merchant bade the brethren press once more that golden plate, as he directed, when a lid on the reverse side opened, and

behold! a lady's countenance, meek and fair, with lifted eyes, and like unto some blessed saint.

They all at once exclaimed, "it is here," and passed the chain from one to another, some looking with wondrous dread, upon the prisoner, and some again on the Prior, who stood darkly watching, and they cried out, "How may this be!"

Then the Prior, with looks of derision, said, "Can ye ask that question, knowing as ye do, that the man before ye is about to be tried in the King's Court for practice of unlawful magic? It avails not, that he has been prevented from touching that chain with his hand; he has exercised a stranger power upon it, than if he had touched it. Those paintings were not there before; the chain has long been mine, as most of ye know. I bought it, before I was of this house."

"And thus it may well be," said one of

the monks, "for this is not so marvellous, as those delusions conjured up in the castle-hall." And they blessed themselves and delivered up the chain to the Prior, who received it, with secret triumph.

"You now behold the charm which has preserved my life from the attempt of that ruffian," said he, pointing to Woodreeve; "and will no more doubt, why his strength failed, when he assailed me."

Too late, the prisoner then perceived, that, in compelling his enemy to produce this chain, he had brought out an argument against himself. The monks had not refused their assent to their Prior's assertion; and, if there were any amongst them, who compared what he had asserted of the protecting virtues of this charm, against the malice of the poor merchant, with what he now said of the magical influence of the man upon this very chain, even while it was in his own hands, they did not dare to

point forth the contradiction. The Prior, still dreading lest the prisoner should throw himself into the hands of the King's guard, as he had offered, now determined, in order to deter him from so doing, to make further use of his over-sight; and, holding up the chain, he called out, "When you shall have surrendered yourself up to justice, here is an evidence, that shall convict you of unlawful arts, if others fail. This picture, which you have conveyed hither by secret magic, shall be more than a living witness against you."

The latter words of the Prior were resounded, it might be by an echo of the aisles: "more than a living witness against you."

The brethren looked round, and Woodreeve listened. There were some among them, who fancied they heard a moaning from the ground underneath, between them and the north wall; others took it for the wind murmuring in the vaults near; but

none of them spoke his thoughts. It might be the hollow blast, that sounds, at fits, before a tempest; for a storm came, soon after, which shook the walls. However this might be, Woodreve shuddered often as he heard it; and, looking round him, recollections rushed suddenly on his mind, that filled it with dismay. He examined eagerly the spot he stood on, and found, that he had indeed taken sanctuary near the grave of his unfortunate kinsman, though no name now appeared on it.

On this discovery, the blood rushed back to his heart, and he was nigh to falling into the like convulsions he had suffered under, when first he saw the Baron de Blondeville, beside the King. On recovering, he knelt down on the grave, raising his hands and eyes, and so continued, for some time. Then, rising and turning to the Prior, who seemed little affected by any thing that had passed; he calmly said,

that he was willing to deliver himself up to the King's officers, soon as they could be brought hither. To this the Prior answered he would send early on the morrow; but, as not even the King's officers might enter that place of sanctuary, to take him thence, he must come forth of himself, ere he could surrender to them. Woodreeve, fearing treachery on the way, liked not this; and so the Prior had foreseen, who for his own purposes, further said, that the officers should wait for him, at the outer gate of the Priory, that so all the world might bear witness the church had not betrayed him to the secular power.

"And, when the world shall bear witness, that my surrender is voluntary," said Woodreeve, in order to daunt the Prior from his purpose; "then will it judge me innocent by that act alone."

So resolute a reply convinced his enemy he had no time to lose in effecting what-

ever wrong he might intend to perpetrate, in pursuance of his wretched policy; and he now departed, meditating on the means of accomplishing it.

Leaving a guard of monks behind at the entrance of the chancel, he gave sign to Wischard, a brother, whom he had long favoured, to follow him to the great chamber. How to compass the death of the prisoner, in so short a space by any poison, that should not betray itself, and bring suspicion on its inventor, he knew not. Sometimes, he thought it were better to give him his liberty to flee away; and so he would have done, could he have been certain the liberty would be so used; but he was rather certain, from what had lately passed, that this would be otherwise; that the prisoner would urge his offer of an escape, as evidence against him, on a charge of having been an ac-

complice in the murder; and that other things might come to light, which would be more easily proved than the guilt of the Baron alone.

With these doubts and fears upon his mind, he remained in the arched chamber, in close consultation with Wischard, till all in the Priory were at rest, save the poor merchant on his kinsman's grave, and those monks who watched him there.

THE SIXTH DAY.

THE SIXTH DAY.

At the head of this chapter was an illuminated drawing of the inside of the White Hall, with the King's court assembled. The King was in a chair, but without a cloth of estate over it; and near him was his high Justicier, who sat on the same platform, in his robes of office. On the steps, near the King's chair, stood a youth, with an observing countenance, intended, no doubt, for Prince Edward; also at the footstool knelt a young man, with a spirited air, offering a chain to the King, who seemed to gaze on him, with amazement and terror. Throughout the hall appeared general consternation; many of the Bishops and Barons stood up, and leaned forward, as if to view what was passing near the King's chair.

THE SIXTH DAY.

Early on the morrow, the Prior of Saint Mary's was at the Castle, in close conference with the Baron de Blondeville, and awaiting a hearing of the King. And, when they had obtained this, having already settled their plot, they set forth, in their own way, so much of the adventure of the night before at the Priory, as they thought necessary to win the King's consent, that the trial of the merchant should be had, on this very day. His Highness had designed to defer it awhile, both because the argument of the Archbishop had taken some hold of him, and because he

thought it not for the honour of the Baron de Blondeville, that this matter should seem to be held of such importance as that, just at this time, it must be further inquired into.

But now, being sore pressed upon by those about him—and it was ever his weakness to be ruled by those nearest at hand rather than by fixed principles either of his own, or of those wiser in council than himself—being sore pressed by the false representations of the wily Prior, he yielded his consent, that the Jury already warned should be summoned to attend in Court, this day, the trial of the poor stranger for divers practices of magical delusion and of the black art, in the great hall. Should they fail to substantiate this head of charge, the Prior had another in the tale he had already told the King of the merchant's pretended attempt upon his life, and his evil practices upon the golden chain.

As matter connected with this charge, he also told his Highness, that the merchant had escaped from the Castle to the Priory, where he then was and where he might be secured; for that he, trusting to his own arts, yet unable to elude the vigilance of the brethren placed there, had audaciously declared, he would resign himself to the King's officers, and throw himself upon justice. The Prior failed not to point out, that there was a daring artfulness in this giving out, and to caution his Highness against the seeming consciousness of innocence, which it was meant to imply. And thus the King seeing, that each day brought forth some new danger, plotted, as it appeared, by the merchant, against the peace and even the lives of his quiet subjects, commanded, without further hesitation, that his trial should commence, on this very day; and his Highness determined to be present his-self in Court, the while.

The Court had indeed already met in the White Hall, and divers small causes had been tried there, the preceding day; many other remained to be settled, during this time of the King's keeping court, at Kenilworth; but it was resolved, that the charge against the merchant should be inqured into immediately on the meeting of the court, which was now beginning to assemble. Notice of this was speedily given there, and the jury and witnesses, being all nigh at hand, were easily brought together.

Meanwhile, a guard was despatched to the Priory gate, there to await the surrender of the merchant. Nor was it without extreme anxiety and fear, that he, on receiving their summons, stepped from the sanctuary, and passed along the passages and chambers to the outer gate, where he gave himself up to justice, and was soon after again a prisoner in the turret. A

night of watchfulness and terror had ill prepared him for the approaching trial; but he endeavoured to support, with the consciousness of innocence and with a recollection of his just motives, the burden of calumny and danger now laid upon him, and to meet, with calmness, the malice of his enemies.

Nathless, so haggard and wan were his looks, when he came before the Court, and beheld his chief accuser, the Baron de Blondeville, that many there scrupled not to say he was guilty even before he was tried. And, as ignorance is always a child, so were there many nobles then in the hall, who, profiting nothing by their years, did hold that magic could be wrought by such as fully applied themselves unto it, and that it had been practised in the banquet-hall by this poor stranger, or by those in league with him. And, as vanity never grows old, but changes its shape

only with the stages of a man's life, so many an aged Baron, now sitting in the King's court, who, in his youth, had valued himself for a handsome person, gorgeously apparelled, and, in his maturer years, for the number of his vassals and the abundance of his castle-banquets—many such a Baron, now in his age, as freshly priding himself on sagacity, such as no arts could baffle, came hither, fortified against the evidence, to abide by his first opinion.

There sat in the White Hall, that day, many bishops and barons of the realm, such as usually composed the King's court, when he wore his crown and held the high festivals of the year. These seldom had been kept at Kenilworth, but, when his Highness was not at his palace at Westminster, either Winchester, or Windsor, Salisbury, Gloucester, York, or other great cities of the realm, were the scenes of them. At such times, not only was justice admi-

nistered to his subjects, but the great councils of the realm were held, and laws were made. Then also were honours dispensed; the King making some knights, others barons, as it so pleased him, and the opportunity required. There too, sometimes, were contracted, or solemnized, such marriages of his own family, or of his nobles, as he countenanced; and too often was it said of King Henry, that he bestowed upon strangers, favourites in his court, the richest heiresses of his kingdom.

At these high festivals of the year, he was in trowth a sovereign, wearing his crown, sitting on his throne, and swaying all the princely power of his sceptre. Then he received homage of his tenants in chief, knights and other; levied fines, and with the help of his justicier, barons and prelates, managed his revenues. How far his Highness was governed by their council,

when he was so hard upon the golden citizens of London, who, in his reign paid in fines for his favour, twenty thousand pounds, I know not. But, never did he practise such cruel means of extortion as did his father, King John.

At such times, too, were decided trials by combat; and among the gorgeous spectacles, then held forth, tilt and tournament surpassed.

But to come back again unto this festival of Kenilworth. The King sat not, this day, upon his throne in court, but upon a chair. beside his justicier, whom he wished to do his part there. He meant not his-self to speak sentence upon the prisoner, as at Westminster, he had done upon Peter de Rivallis, his treasurer, whom he sent from open court to the tower of London, by his own word of command. Amongst other of the King's chief officers, who this day kept state in court, were

the Earl of Hereford, Lord Constable of England; the Earl of Norfolk, Lord Mareschall of England; Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the King's Seneschall; the High Chamberlain; the Chancellor, and the Treasurer. The Archbishop of York was not there; being, as the Baron de Blondeville and the Prior of Saint Mary's well knew, yet at Coventry; and, therefore, had they so hurried forward this business.

It was suspected, that the Baron and his friend had taken special means, that the jury, chosen for this trial, might be such as were likely men to serve their views; and they feared not, that the King would now do, as he had formerly done at Winchester. There, as is well known, some merchants of Brabant, having accused to his Highness some of his household of having robbed them, the thieves, on being brought to trial, were acquitted.

by the jury; who, though wealthy men, were proved to be in league with the offenders; on which, the King, without scruple, commanded them to prison; and caused another jury to be summoned, who found them guilty of that they had been charged with. But the Baron trusted enough in the King's kindness not to fear he would do the like now.

What passed in the merchant's mind, while now in court, waiting his trial, may not be told, within compass; save that he resolved, when opportunity should come, boldly to charge the Prior with possessing the golden chain, worn by his kinsman when he fell, and of having been an accomplice in that foul deed.

For, well he now remembered, where he had first seen his face and heard his voice. This was at a little hostel, where he and his companions had rested them awhile, a few hours before the robbery.

There, in the settle, beside the blazing logs, sat that same Prior, drinking mead. He wore not then the garments of the church, which he should never have put on, but the livery of war; and the merchant had taken him for a common follower of some knight, so coarse and worn were the clothes beneath his hauberk. When they were departing, he asked which road they went, feigning to be fearful, in those times, of passing alone through the forest: and, having learned their way, said his was different, and bade them well to Kenilworth, ere night should come on.

Afterwards, during the perpetration of the crime, the merchant, who discerned not his person, nor his features, through the disguise he had taken, soon as he spoke, recollected the voice; and, within a short time, he had recognized both voice and features in the same man; though the countenance was so changed

and bloated, and the present voice so artificial, that this recollection had not come, but by accident. The present dress of the Prior, too, and his station had gone to retard this. But now, when tones and countenance had been partly recollected, and that golden chain was seen on the same individual, Woodreeve was not suffered to doubt that the Prior of Saint Mary's was one of those, who had robbed him. Nor was that so wonderful in times, when lawless violence had almost overrun the whole land; and when the King, as has been seen, found it necessary to commit to prison twelve householders of Hampshire, for having leagued with thieves in his own household!

But to come back, once more, to what passed this day, in the Court. It were tedious to tell of all this—of the names of such as assisted in the judgment, or of the forms and ceremonies, observed during

the trial; though these were curious to behold, and in themselves most grave and princely. Nevertheless, some things shall be related, which more nearly concerned the prisoner, and which struck many persons with marvellous dread. We vouch not for the truth of all here told; we only repeat what others have said and their selves credited; but in these days what is there of strange and wonderful, which does not pass as current as the coin of the land; and what will they not tell in hall, or chamber, seated by night over blazing logs, as if their greatest pleasure were to fear?

Some, who tell the story, say they were witnesses in court of what passed there, and that the marvels brought about, were through the arts of that same joculator, who came into the banquet-hall, before the visions there shown, and who, they scrupled not to say, was one of those

magicians, from the East, who were well known to have raised strange delusions in many a hall here in England. But this man was not seen in court, that day, nor had he been seen, any where, either in the castle, or town, since that memorable night of the festival, though strict search had been made for him.

The accusation against Woodreeve ran thus. It charged him with having raised up certain delusions, by means of unlawful arts of withcraft, or of magic, to the end of persuading the King and his nobles, that the charge of a dreadful crime, imputed by the prisoner to the Baron de Blondeville, was true. And it farther alleged, that he had by witchcraft acted upon the person of the Baron, causing, at divers times, a suspicion of all his faculties, and, as it were, binding up his whole soul in a trance, so that he could neither speak, nor see, nor move. There were, it was

affirmed, hundreds in the court, who had seen the marvellous pageant, which had appeared on the night of the great banquet, and not one could tell how it came thither, or by whom it was invented. They were many also, who had seen the Baron's condition, both in chapel and hall.

And it seemed plain enough, that all this was the work of evil sprite, in league with an artful man. Who this might be, whether the poor merchant, or that strange minstrel, that had entered the hall of festival, who was there, that might tell? Many and divers were the opinions and sayings upon this affair; but, though all thought the delusion supernatural, none held the merchant to be guilty of it. Nay, there were not wanting those, who willingly credited, that the Baron was guilty of all, which the vision seemed to accuse him of; yet none dared hint such thought, knowing the place he held in the King's

favour. And, perchance, this very high favour, shown forth by the new title granted to him, did incline many, though the cause was unknown of themselves, to judge the worst of him.

Now, when all the proceedings were finished, the jury thought the same as the many, that, though there had been evil practices, there was nothing to show that the prisoner knew ought of them; and so they said by their verdict. But when all looked to him to remark his joy, they saw his countenance still anxious and fearful. The trowth is, he dreaded the Prior, more than any other enemy, and that he would pursue him far more artfully than the Baron had done.

The King was much disturbed at the verdict given, and the Baron would have been more so, had he not trusted to the further measures of his friend.

But now it was, that the poor merchant,

finding himself detained and seeing the peril in wait for him, accused the Prior of Saint Mary's, of having been one of the robbers, confederates of the Baron de Blondeville, affirming that he his-self had seen on his neck a chain, which had been taken from his murdered friend.

By the King and most present, this accusation was considered as the effort of a desperate man; and it took away from him all pity, and turned their hearts against him. Others there were, who judged less hardly of him, and these suspected, that his brain was disordered by the fits he was subject to have at times, and would have had him withdrawn from the judge, and taken in hand by the physician.

But the Prior had already delivered in an accusation against him, not only of having practised magical arts, but of having forcibly attempted his life; and the court must do their duty. So, a new jury

having been called, this second trial of Woodreeve began, at the especial petition of the Prior and by command of the King. The Baron remained in court, and some observed he seemed as earnest in the Prior's cause as he had been in his own.

This latter charge having been fully stated, the first witness examined was the prison-keeper of Cæsar's tower, and the jury scrupled not to hear his say, though he must condemn himself of want of vigilance, at least, if he did not accuse the prisoner of arts superior to human resistance. This man said, that he had secured the prison-chamber, at the usual hour, and that, during the night, all had remained so still, you might have heard a leaf stir, save, that, at the second watch-piping, the wayte had called out to him, that some one had entered the tower; when he, finding the strong door fastened, as he had left it, and not having before heard any noise,

knew this could not have been, and so had told the wayte. On the morrow, going as usual to the prison-chamber, he found that door secure, as he had made it, but when he undid it—the merchant was no longer within! He could account for his disappearance by no mortal means; and so he ended his say.

Then the knights, on service at the great portal, were questioned, and their answers were partly to the same purpose. One of them, indeed, said he had heard a noise from the room over the dungeon, soon after the wayte had piped the third watch; but, on trying the door, he found it fast, and so thought no more of it. And now it cannot be doubted, that the knight, who was the secret friend of the Baron de Blondeville, had tampered with his companions, or, in some way, had deceived them, since they could thus slightly treat that, which had caused a clarion to be sounded.

But, they could truly say, as they did, that they had seen no one go forth of the gates, or move any where, save their own men. And, knowing that they had been too bountiful of wine to those of the port-cullis chamber, they might dislike, and avoid to say anything, that would lead to a discovery of the condition of those drowsy guards.

These wardours of the port-cullis room being questioned, touching the fastening of the tower-door, one of them took that matter upon himself; for, though none of them knew what had happened, yet did they, for their own credit, conceal their ignorance, save he, who said, that he thought one came in the night and gave him a blow; but he knew not how he got away, nor any thing more about his assailant! "You were slumbering on your post, Carle," said his examiner; but this he stoutly denied, to the admiration of

the poor prisoner, who knew the whole party had been in such deep sleep, that he had heard them snorting two chambers off. For this the Prior had his-self accounted, as before rehearsed; but he allowed not himself to smile.

Next were called the wayte and his groom; and the old man deposed he had seen some one pass through the upper court, as he was going the second round, so closely muffled up, he knew not who he was, and the person had passed by so quickly, that, though he pursued his steps, yet could he never see him after. He thought he had gone to Cæsar's tower; but, on giving an alarm there, he found he had mistaken, the keeper having declared he had seen no one enter. Afterwards, he had searched the upper court, and questioned those on guard there, but they had neither seen nor heard any thing. Still, not being satisfied that all was right, he had

taken his station in the porch opposite to the great tower, and there watched out the night, save when he had piped his rounds; but he had not seen any one come forth of the tower, nor any persons but the guard, the whole night long. This testimony of the wayte the guard confirmed.

During these narratives of the witnesses, the Prior kept an unconcerned countenance, and none present suspected him of being that unknown person; while many thought the prisoner his-self was the man, on his way out of the castle, and that the wayte had mistaken the course he took.

When the sentinels of the ramparts and posterns were questioned, all were found to agree, that no living thing had been seen, or heard, from wall or battlement, to pass forth of the Castle, during that night. Then were most of the persons present

confirmed in their suspicion, that the merchant possessed some secret art, by which he had conveyed himself from the Castle into the Priory. It signified not to their apprehension, that such art, if he had possessed it, might have conveyed him clean away, from his enemies; they troubled not themselves to think so far; or, perchance, they guessed there were certain limits and boundaries to the power of magic. But, whether the limit here drawn was consistent with the end designed, who was there, that could judge?

After these witnesses, the Prior his-self came forward and repeated his own tale, at length, such as he had already related it to the King. And he brought several of his monks and others of the convent, as evidence, that the prisoner had, in the midst of the night, fled from the great chamber of the Priory to the church, and there sought refuge at the sanctuary, as if he

dreaded punishment for some crime. They dwelt on the disorder and emotion he had betrayed, the seeming consciousness of guilt, and the boldness and desperation, with which he had accused the Prior of having unlawfully possessed himself of the golden chain, which he, this day in Court, had made the subject of accusation against him. This chain, they said, pertained to an amulet, which had preserved their Prior's life from the dagger of the assassin; on which chain the prisoner had, though standing apart at the sanctuary, so wrought, it being then in the hands of certain brethren of the house, as to cause a painting to appear, that was not there before.

While this tale was telling, the Archbishop of York, who was just returned from his visit to the Bishop of Coventry, then lying in grievous sickness, had entered the Court, and taken his proper place. He it was, who inquired, whether this golden

chain were at hand; on which the high justicier ordered it should be produced. Then, the Prior, who pretended a wish to show it, drew it forth from his neck, and, it was carried to the King, who examined it, looking long on the painting of that fair dame, the widow of the unfortunate knight. Close within the rim of that picture was drawn a little face, like unto a cherub looking up, in peace, to the Lady, who seemed to smile upon him, in tender affection. The Archbishop, when he perused the picture, was wonderly struck both with the resemblance to the shadow he had seen in the hall, and with that of the fair dame, which had been there presented in the pageant.

The King, looking again upon the picture, acknowledged the likeness, and then summoning the Baron to his side, showed him the portrait, and put the chain into his hands; who, having received it on his

knee, rose up, and withdrew to a window, the better to examine it. Thither followed him the eyes of the Archbishop and the Prior, but each with different interest and motive for watchfulness. My Lord of York observed the chain to tremble in its holder's hand; and believed, that Woodreeve had spoken the truth.

The Prior saw, that the countenance of his associate was altered, and hoped that he would be resolute, during the whole trial; each was contented, in his own way, and awaited calmly what might follow. But, when the Baron had gazed awhile, he became agitated. He seemed to shrink, and, averting his face from the object he contemplated, he held it nearly at arm's length. Then, he looked again, drawing the portrait nearer to his sight, and then, again withdrew it, while a livid paleness overspread his countenance; and he seemed hardly able to support himself.

Then, as if regaining all his courage, he left the window; but, instead of returning the portrait to the King, he was conveying it to the Prior, when my Lord Archbishop cried out, "My Lord, his Highness hath not yet done with that chain; give it into the hands, from which you received it."

The Baron stopped; he seemed to be angered, and, half turning with a haughty mien and frowning look, he answered, "I obey no command but the King's."

On this the King, graciously smiling, said, "I desire it of you."

The Baron, immediately advancing to the state chair, dropped his knee, and presented the chain; on receiving which and looking again upon the picture, his Highness spoke with surprise to the Baron, who bowed, with a disclaiming gesture, and said a few words, which none nigh could hear; while Prince Edward, who

stood on the steps, below the King's chair, viewed him with a suspicious eye; for, young as he was, he had observed that in him, which he liked not. And now he saw with wonder, the earnestness, with which his father looked upon the picture; for he knew not, that it showed the likeness of the knight, who had appeared in the banquet-hall.

Unknowingly, the Baron had touched the spring, which disclosed this portrait, and had shut up that of the unhappy widow. Prince Edward looked again on the Baron, thinking he had wrought some change in the picture, leading to mischief and designed against the prisoner, to whose cause his heart secretly inclined him. From all that he had seen before, and on this day, he judged him to be innocent of evil intention; and he had not failed to tell the King, his father, privately all his thoughts.

But his Highness, whose understanding was often baffled by his humours and by the arts of cunning men, thought not with his son in this matter; and, he moreover, suspected this change in the painting to be wrought by the merchant, or his agents, as the Prior had before affirmed; or by some new art of magic. Still his sight dwelt on that portrait, whose look of quiet sadness so much remembered him of that, which the knight in the pageant had shown, when departing from his family and his native shore. After long perusing the portrait, the King lifted his eyes from it, and beheld! once more before him, the form of that very knight; such as had appeared on the steps of the dais.

It was in truth the very image of this shadowed forth here in miniature; the same armour, worn in the same way, with vizor up, and the eyes showing that same solemn and resigned look, save that they

were now fixed, somewhat sternly on the King. It seemed as if his Highness only perceived this person, while he sat motionless, and, for some moments, silent.

Then he rose, hastily, and commanded, that the stranger should be secured! Vain command. Those, who heard it, perceived not for whom it was designed; but looked upon each other with wonder and amazement: and many there were near him, who feared his Highness was stricken with sudden distemper. Whether the Archbishop saw aught, or only suspected the cause is not known; but he was observed to make that holy gesture, which formerly he had used in the greater hall. The King, with some anger, repeated his command! but he whom he would have seized, no more appeared.

For awhile, his Highness seemed struck with dismay; he sat and covered his eyes

with his hand, reclining him in his chair. Then, imputing this appearance to the same art as the former, dread gave way to indignation against the prisoner; and he resolved to have immediate justice done; not only in punishment of past offences, but to put an end to those deceits and mischiefs, from which it seemed, that even his-self was not secured. Sometimes, too, he doubted whether this man might not be an agent of his bitter enemy, Lewellyn of Wales; by whose evil arts he had, as he deemed, been formerly robbed of that precious ring, which was to render him invincible in war. If this were so, the prisoner added to the guilt of being a spy and a traitor, that of feigned agitations and sorrow, touching a deed never committed.

Orders being given that the trial should immediately proceed, the Baron de Blondeville, who, while this image had re-

mained before the King, 'was busied in another part of the hall, and thus escaped its influence, advanced to the chair, and received again the chain, with intent to deliver it to the Prior. Now, that which follows, was reported of many present in the court, with what truth I know not; but it is here faithfully related.

No sooner had the Baron received into his hand that golden chain, than the eyes of all near were fixed upon his robe. It was the same he wore on the night of the banquet, and on which, when passing from the King's chamber, through the brown gallery with the Prior, and meeting there the marvellous stranger, three drops of blood had fallen. These had been partly erased; but they were now not unnoticed, though none knew whence they came.

No sooner had he received this chain of the deceased knight, then each little drop

began to spread, till that side of his garment became covered, as it were, with crimson, seeming to maintain the notion, that is gone forth, that after some prolonged presence of the murderer, the blood of the deceased will become fresh again, wherever it may be found, as if newly shed.

The King, 'tis said, beheld this in silence, not knowing what it might mean, though guessing it to be some new device of sorcery. The Prior remained in his place, with downward look; while the prisoner, in his, lifted up his hands to Heaven.

My Lord Archbishop rose and turned himself to his Highness as though he would address him; but he did not. Prince Edward's looks were bent steadily upon the Baron, as were also most of those, that composed the King's court, but no one

spoke, each awaiting for what another might first say. There was a general confusion and amazement in the hall.

The Baron his-self stood looking down upon his garment, with the chain trembling in his hand. How long he might have continued standing there none knew, had not the King's voice recalled him from his trance, and bade him deliver the chain to the secretary at the table, there to remain, till the trial should conclude. He obeyed with looks, that seemed to say this command foretold some diminution of favour; and, after his having delivered it, behold a new marvel; for that great crimson stain began to separate into three parts, and then to lessen and fade away, till it wholly disappeared, leaving his robe bright and rich as before.

Then there was a general tumult and outcry in the court, of, "justice, justice! the prisoner hath spoken the truth! The

chain of the deceased hath borne witness against the Baron, the Baron de Blondeville."

At these words, the Baron seemed to recover all his spirit; he threw a glance of indignation round the court, and then, walking firmly up to the King, did homage, and remained on his knee, ready to plead for protection, when the tumult should subside. Again my Lord, the Archbishop, turned towards his Highness, calmly awaiting the return of silence. The Prior also stood up, and was haranguing, with vehement gesticulation, though no one could hear a single word he uttered. But the poor merchant, having seen this second marvellous sign in his favour, testified no presumptuous joy; he had sank down, overcome with humble gratitude, unable either to speak, or to shed a tear.

In vain the King raised his arm on high, and his chief justicier stood up, with

stern countenance, to restore order; each individual spectator followed the promptings of his own thoughts, and uttered them without scruple, though scarcely any one could be heard. And thus it went, for some time, till divers of the crowd, without the hall, hearing that something extraordinary was passing within, pressed forward to the court, so that those sitting there became afraid for their lives, and the King's guards were called upon to do their duty, which they at last performed, with no small difficulty.

At this so flagrant a breach of good 'haviour in the King's court and in his very presence, his Highness was much moved, and he willingly attributed it to the malignant passions of pride and jealousy, directed against the Baron de Blondeville, who was doubly obnoxious, as being a stranger by birth and exalted by favour. So his Highness became more warmly attached to

his cause than before, and more resolute to protect him against the united force of his enemies. Silence being at last restored, his Highness bade the Baron de Blondeville "Rise, and fear not; for justice shall overtake the guilty." The Archbishop liked not the King's frown, as he spoke these words, and he sat down disdainfully, without uttering what was in his mind.

Not so the Prior of Saint Mary's, who had been impatiently watching for the moment, when he might be heard, and who now boldly cried out, "My Lord Archbishop, will you now credit the truth that is before you? Will you now deny the power of sorcery? Here, in the very court, this false accuser has unwarily betrayed his guilt; here, in the face of justice, exercising his art, with a view to deprive the Baron de Blondeville both of honour and of life, he has made evident the truth of my accusation against himself. You yourself,

have now witnessed, that a spell is in that chain, which his presence has put in movement, and you can no longer question what I have related of yesternight, or of his motive for exercising his infamous art. He has caused these paintings to appear in the chain, that he may claim it for his deceased kinsman's, who, he pretends, was murdered, that by this circumstance he may prove the extravagant and ridiculous charge he has fabricated against me. By the same arts of sorcery, exercised upon the Baron's robe, he would confirm the other slander he has uttered—that against the Baron de Blondeville; and, by connecting this second marvel with the first, he would fain make it appear that the Baron and myself were confederated in the same crime. But, in so doing, he has proved nothing but the force of his spells and of his malice, and has turned them unwittingly against himself alone, since his

Highness cannot be deceived. My Lord Archbishop, will you now deny the power of sorcery?"

When he had ceased, the Archbishop rose with calm and dignified countenance, as of one, who holds the balance in his own hands; and, without deigning to notice the Prior, he called upon the justicier to put an end to this irregular proceeding, and to make the trial go on. It was only in submission to the King, that this disorderly interruption had been permitted by the High Justicier, his Highness having given him a sign, that the Prior should be heard; but now he willingly resumed his duty. However, the words of the Prior had not been in vain; for, they took effect upon the minds of many in the court, to the prejudice of the poor merchant, and to a confirmation of both charges against him, that of sorcery, and that of attempted assassination. And thus it seemed, that the

very marvel, which at first made against the Baron, being now warped and twisted by the so crafty Prior, was likely to end in the prisoner's ruin.

'Then, the merchant his-self was examined; but the truth which he told, of the Prior having come to him and offered him liberty, appeared less plausible than his accuser's falsehood. That he should have hesitated to accept the freedom thus offered, few could credit; yet the testimony of the wayte, seemed to support Woodreeve's story, which, had he been suffered to proceed, would have been further proved by his account of the many secret ways, through which he was conducted, and which were so little known, that by hardly any other means than those of experience, could he have been made acquainted with them. But, when he began to tell of that door in the Constable's great chamber, which led into those passages of

the walls and so, by covert windings, down into the port-cullis room, and to those hidden vaults below, he was suddenly checked in his story. Those, who willed not, that these secrets, and, partly, safeguards of the castle, should be made public, denied that there were such; and, feigning to be weary of so long-winding a tale, they brought it to a speedy conclusion, by commanding the prisoner to be less tedious and to account for his appearance in the Prior's chamber, which surely was not in the castle, but in the Priory. Now, how could he fully do so, but by tracing out all his steps thither? And this he was forbidden to do; and he could not but see, that he should be resolutely contradicted by those, who, if they had no concert with his enemies, fancied they were required by duty to tell a falsehood—as if any duty to man could require that! Being then, forbidden to take this course, he only related,

that, having followed the Prior into a subterraneous way under the castle-ditch, hoping it would lead him to the forest, his life had been threatened by the Prior, on his discovering and claiming that very golden chain, which had been shown this day in court. He further told, that, having escaped from the uplifted dagger, he had fled along that avenue, which brought him to the Prior's chamber, whence he had again been compelled to fly from pursuit, which had scarcely permitted him even the rights of sanctuary.

While the prisoner was telling this part of his story, the most profound silence reigned throughout that hall, where lately not one voice could be heard from another; nay, hardly the trumpet of the King's guard, amidst the stormy multitude. Many, while they listened, found themselves inclining to the merchant's

cause; and some would entirely believe, that he had spoken only the truth.

Amongst the latter, were the young Prince Edward and the venerable Archbishop—ingenuous youth and discerning age. Always, indeed, had the conscientious sagacity of the Archbishop inclined him to Woodreeve's cause; and what he had heard formerly and lately at Coventry, respecting the Prior, confirmed his opinion. He knew also enough of the ways, employed by some in those times to procure riches, to be incredulous of the strange history of this Prior, whose unaccountable wealth had procured for him his present rank from the Pope's legate.

Others present there were, who, though but too well acquainted with the lawless and desperate manners of those days, yet refused to acknowledge, that a man of the Prior's office and rank could be guilty of

the crime. Amongst those, who inclined to the prisoner, were some of the jury; when now there came into court, one Aaron, a Jew of Lincoln. He came in not by accident; but, as some shrewdly guessed, was sent by those, who, knowing the man, and his way of trade, designed to make him an instrument on this occasion.

The business, that first brought him to Kenilworth, was to pay the Queen that usual surplus of a King's fine, called "Aurum Reginæ." This man had been heavily fined; and, as it is said, for having falsified a charter. However this might be, he had now to pay, to the Queen alone, about six hundred marks; in present payment for which sum, her Highness took of him a transfer of a deed, by which this Jew held in pawn of John Vavasour, the manor of Hazlewood, which that ancient family had held of the de Percies, even in the

Conqueror's reign. The deed, thus rescued by the Queen from the Jew, who had withheld it, that he might extort for it an exorbitant sum, was by her returned to the same John, on his paying to her the rehersed sum of six hundred marks. But this circumstance is here related only, that it may appear what sort of person this Jew was, on whose word might probably depend the life of an innocent man. Now, this Aaron, when he came into the hall, and was produced as a witness, desired to see that same golden chain, worn of the Prior and sworn to, of the merchant, as having been about the neck of his deceased kinsman, at the time of the murder.

On this, the Prior, looking hardly at the Jew, feigned to remember him, saying, as he delivered up the chain, "You should know it well; for, if I err not, it was of you that I purchased it. I was

then returning from a prilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Hugh, at Lincoln."

"You are right," quoth the Jew; "this chain, I remember me, I sold to you for fifty marks of gold, some five or six years back. You were not then Prior of Saint Mary's, but a brother of Coventry."

"Behold!" said the Prior, "one who can bear testimony against the false story of the prisoner. Let an oath be administered unto him."

"He is a Jew!" cried out a voice; "his oath may not be taken."

"The *law* is against it," said another; "but who may prevent his word being credited?"

The Prior then demanded of him whether he remembered any paintings concealed in the chain? and the Jew replied, that there were no paintings, when he sold it to him; but to the chain itself he could swear, if he were permitted to do so. He

had bought it of a goldsmith of London, then living in Chepe; it was of fine gold, and of the best workmanship; for that citizen of London had in his workshop one Giocondi, a Florentine, who was famous for such things; and by him was it made. With those fine paintings, he should have valued the whole at not less than one hundred marks.

Here again was a contention, whether the oath of a Jew could be received; some saying the law was against it; others, that, when King John's reign ended, that law had ceased. And thus it went, for some time, till the King, rising from his chair, commanded that an oath should be administered, and this was done, after the Archbishop had obtained of the court, that the oath to be taken of the Jew should not be such as we swear. Then the Archbishop, turning towards the Prior, demanded of what house in Coventry he had been a

brother, and at what time he had purchased the chain.

"At the time of my pilgrimage to Saint Hugh, of Lincoln," answered the Prior; "then I purchased that chain of Aaron."

"Of what house where you a brother?" repeated the Archbishop sternly.

"Of Saint Nicholas."

"Of what order."—Of the benedictine."

"I know not of any house at Coventry, that is both of that name and order," observed the Archbishop.

"I said not I was of Coventry," replied the Prior.

"Your *friend* has said so," urged the Archbishop, "and till now, you have not contradicted him."

"The Jew is mistaken," said the Prior; "I know not that he is my friend; if he were so, in trowth, he would have been better acquainted with my former abode."

"Answer, without further evasion," said

the Archbishop, "and tell to what town and brotherhood you belonged at the time of your pilgrimage."

"I was then of the Priory of Saint Nicholas, in Exeter."

"Your's was a long pilgrimage," said the Archbishop, fixing his eyes attentively upon the Prior.

My Lord Bishop said not more; but listened constantly to the further evidence of this Aaron, which went hard against the merchant, touching the matter of the chain, and when one, who pleaded for the Prior, drew up each particular of the prisoner's tale, such as he had his-self related it, many improbable circumstances appeared on the face of it. To those unacquainted with his enemies' true history and character, there seemed to be little motive for his attempt to lead away Woodreeve from his prison, to give him liberty, if that were in trowth the end he had in view, when he was said to have conducted

him from the tower; and, if that were not his end, and he had designed to prevent any discovery of his own former guilt, by the assassination of the merchant, why, said they, did he pass over the opportunity afforded by that avenue described by the prisoner himself, as so secret and remote. To these persons there appeared neither cause sufficient to have urged the Prior to draw forth a poniard with intent to kill, nor, having done so, any motive to restrain his hand, in a place so convenient to his purpose.

For Woodreeve, when he related that the Prior appeared horror-struck at the moment of aiming the dagger, had not explained the cause of this, nor did he his-self know it, though by it his life had been saved. Neither, if he had known and related it, would they, in all likehood, have heeded him; but it was afterwards supposed, that the Prior, at that dangerous

moment, had been awed by the appearance of the deceased knight.

These considerations, together with the evidence of the Jew, at last determined the jury against the poor merchant, who was adjudged guilty of having attempted the life of the Prior and of having practised arts of sorcery, which, it was supposed, had been made visible this day, in open court.

On this verdict, many made known their satisfaction, and approached the Baron de Blondeville, and the Prior, with joyful words. But there was not one to shed a tear with the prisoner, or who dared to show him any sign of sympathy.

My Lord Archbishop seemed much disposed to do so; for, his countenance expressed grave displeasure, when all was joy around him. Even the smiles of the King could not move him to any show of accordance. It became plain he thought

the condemned person innocent; and, perhaps, he suspected, that the witnesses and even the jury had been unduly practised with; but of this he spoke nothing. Prince Edward, too, seemed not well pleased with this transaction; for, his eyes were sometimes sternly fixed on the Prior, and even on the Baron himself, whose heart was now at ease, who stood on the steps of the King's chair, cap in hand, discoursed to by his Highness.

But there was one present in the court, though unseen, whose joy did equal his. This was the Lady-baroness, his fair bride, who, from a gallery on high, concealed from view by a lattice-work, had anxiously watched all, which passed in court, and now, that the honour of her lord was rescued from what she had been taught to think was but the malice of a secret enemy, she had nearly sunk under the tumult of the contrary feelings of joy for

one, and pity for the unhappy instrument of the other.

Woodreeve, weighed down with grief and despair, was led back to his prison through a curious and busy crowd, too many of them willing to see him suffer death without delay, eager for some new spectacle. But his sentence was postponed, during the King's pleasure, who, well contented with the verdict, meant not that the dreadful infliction should take place, till after his own departure from Kenilworth; and thus the court broke up; Woodreeve to his prison-tower, there to await his fate; the Prior to his home, secretly to exult in the success of his wicked wiles, and to plot new ones; the Archbishop to his chamber, there to meditate alone; the Baron, to rejoice with the unsuspecting Lady Barbara; the King to refresh himself, and the whole Court to talk over what had passed; and to pre-

pare them for the diversions and merriment appointed for the approaching evening, unsuitable as they were, at this time.

The merchant, when he had once more taken possession of his solitary turret, desired means wherewith to send a letter to his wife—for he could write—that she, now at distance, and in daily expectation of his return, might be somewhat prepared for his fate. But, even this poor request was denied him, under pretence, that it was feared he might work, with unlawful characters in the black art, further evil against those he had accused, or those, who had the custody of him.

While the trial had been proceeding in the White Hall, the Queen, with many noble ladies attending, went into the Hall of Banquet, to view the shields of the knights, candidates for prizes in a tournament, which had been appointed for the morrow; and there a strange accident

happened. The shields were hung in array, round this gorgeous hall, and the banner of each knight waved over his shield. An officer of arms attended, who called aloud to whom each shield belonged, with the name and full titles of the owner; that, if any lady had cause of complaint, against any knight-candidate, she might touch his shield; and, without aid of words, this action was sufficient to cause that shield to be taken from its place; that, if, on inquiry, there were reason to suppose him guilty of any 'haviour derogatory to the honour of chivalry, his name might be erased from amongst those of the candidates, and himself adjudged unworthy to break a lance on the field.

There was now in the hall a great display of shields; for, besides the many nobles and knights of the realm of England, who had entered their names for the lists, there

were knights, drawn hither from all quarters; some from France, some from Scotland, and some from Germany. Amidst this show of shields, which had been here for some days, and which had not been disturbed by the late trial, three spaces on the walls betrayed, that three knights had been already accused. To many, who looked upon these vacancies, the blanks there seemed to plead for those whose shields had been condemned; when, perhaps, their enemies could not have proved aught against them, had they been accused in any other manner. The Baron de Blondeville's was not one of these proscribed shields.

Now, it happened, during this visit of very many ladies, that one amongst them went from shield to shield, examining the bearings in each, without awaiting the due progress of the herald, in his course of explanation, around the walls. Looking

deliberately at every shield, she stood still before several, and seemed to meditate. Meanwhile, the singularity of her conduct and appearance drew the attention of many persons. She was not habited in the fashion of the court, or in any dress of ceremony, but wore a mourning robe and a veil, that flowed to her feet, but this had been lifted, while she was examining the shields, and even now partly betrayed her face. She was not of the court, nor was she known of any of those, who gave attention to her; yet had she an air of distinction and of graceful ease, with, as some thought a foreign aspect; and each, who knew her not, supposed she was known of some other, and had good right to be there; perhaps, the sister of one of the foreign knights.

Her beauty was faded, yet seemed she young, and she had a look of sorrow and of wildness, too, that touched the hearts

of many, that beheld her. By her own thoughts she was so much enwrapt, that she observed not how much she was noticed, though indeed little was said, her Highness the Queen being present.

When the herald came to the shield of the Baron de Blondeville, which was blazoned high, with all his new honours, he called forth loudly his name and titles. Then, on a sudden, this lady seemed to know where she was and what she came there for. With grave air, yet confident, walking up the hall, she stayed her steps before his shield, and examined it deliberately, the herald somewhat lingering the while. Having so stood, some little space, she bent her head, and, covering her eyes with her veil, she seemed to weep.

Then, lifting up her veil she stepped towards the shield, and touched it, looking at the herald, as she did so; but she

spoke not one word. And this was sufficient, as the custom went. Immediately, the officer at arms advanced, to take down the shield from the wall, which he did not without some difficulty.

The Queen, seeing what was done, and that it was the Baron de Blondeville's shield, that was displaced, inquired who was the lady, that had caused its disgrace. But no one could tell, and she had already left the hall, well contented with what had been done. Then her Highness, blaming the herald for his speed, commanded, that the steps of this fair accuser should be followed, and her name and rank declared, that it might appear now whether her act were worthy to take so much effect, and, afterwards whether she had just cause of grief and complaint. And, until these things, or some of them, should be known, she bade the herald replace the shield on the wall.

So the Lord-Marshall of England, who was attending upon her Highness, was then compelled to speak; and he said, with submission, that might not be done; the laws of chivalry forbidding, unless by especial command of the King. So her Highness let that pass, well knowing, that the King would order the shield to be replaced, except insurmountable cause should appear against it. And then, having viewed the remaining shields, she, with all that company of noble ladies, withdrew.

But this accident caused much marvelling in the court, many thinking it was occasioned by some new offence of the Baron, and that a great deal yet remained to be told against him; others, that the unknown lady was the widow of the Knight, who, it was said, had been slain by him; and that she had not gone away, so far, or so fast, but that her name

might be easily learned by the heralds, if they were more fully ordered to discover it. Others, who held the Baron innocent, said this was only some new device of his enemies; and that, if any such female had really appeared in the hall, she had doubtless got out of the reach of discovery, into some sufficient, though near concealment.

The King, soon as he heard the report of this adventure, commanded, that strict search should be made for the lady-accuser; and that, meanwhile, the Baron's shield should be restored to its place, unstained by suspicion; there to remain until the morrow's tournament, or until surer cause should appear for removing it.

This night, his Highness kept state, not in the hall, but in the great chamber; my Lord, the Archbishop, being ever at his right hand, whose gravity seemed not to yield, for one moment, to all the mirth

around him. In trowth, he was not a man to be capable of festive enjoyment, when a fellow-creature had been recently condemned to wretchedness, had he even thought him guilty; but he thought not so. On all that passed, he looked with equal eye, and said little, answering only when his Highness spoke to him. Some thought he looked with displeasure on that extravagant pomp, which was here displayed in every thing, at a time, when the King had little in his coffers, and knew not well how to fill them.

With this King Henry it was ever so, on the score of money; good as he was, on many other points, he ever lived for the present hour, and suffered the next to shift for itself. His brother, my Lord of Cornwall, did otherwise; he took good care to gather up some of what he saw so bountifully scattered; and to keep it safe for his own purposes in time to come.

He had both cooler heart and head than King Henry; who spared neither trouble nor money, to advance him to the height, which he had obtained for him, and had caused him to be chosen King of the Romans, although he had once nearly raised a rebellion, with no better motive than that he wished to possess the manor of Berkhamstead; and so no more of such matters. Only those, who attributed the Archbishop's more than wonted gravity, to the wasteful magnificence, which was then displaying itself before him, did not reach the whole course of his so thoughtful mood.

It was, above all, the weakness of the King, which subjected him to the sway of designing men, and to be drawn aside from the administration of justice, that alarmed and grieved the bishop. And, this day, he thought he had beheld in him a striking instance of blindness to the cause

of the oppressed. He knew, better than any one, the efforts he had made to warn the King against the Prior of St. Mary's; and to persuade him, it was quite as possible the Baron de Blondeville should be guilty of one crime, as the prisoner of another; so that his Highness should listen, without prejudice, to what appeared on either side; but he could not so persuade.

Now, before the Archbishop had left Kenilworth for Coventry, the King had been so far influenced by his advice, that he had promised to postpone the intended trial of the merchant, till some further light should be thrown upon so extraordinary an accusation, and one made with astonishing hardihood; and it was chiefly to obtain this information from the Bishop of Coventry, that his good brother went so hastily thither; but it was of a bootless hope. The Bishop and the Prior

there knew little of the character, or the former history of the Prior of Kenilworth; what they could communicate, confirmed the former suspicions of the Archbishop.

This day, when the trial was ended, he had despatched a messenger to the Prior of Saint Nicholas, in Exeter, to learn whether he knew aught of the Prior of Saint Mary's; and whether the Prior had spoken the truth, when he said, that he had been a brother of the Benedictine Priory, of that name, in that city. Yet the great distance to be travelled through difficult roads, made it doubted whether his messenger would return, during any delay, which he might have sufficient influence to obtain of the King, in counteraction to that of the Baron de Blondeville and the Prior; who, for their own supposed security, might be urging, unceasingly, for speedy sentence upon their accuser.

If the Archbishop, on this night, looked

sad in this courtly chamber, so did not the Baron de Blondeville. He had now regained all the gaiety of his nation and age; and danced a measure to the joyance of all present; the Queen and her ladies declaring their admiration to the Baroness. Then, was there solemn dancing of many lords and noble dames; the King's five harpers playing the while.

Prince Edward, with the Baroness de Blondeville, performed a bass-dance, to the noise of the harps only. And then, finding himself oppressed with his mantle, which was of velvet, thickly embroidered, and besides heavily guarded with gold lace, he impatiently threw it off, and danced a round right merrily in his jacket, to the sound of the recorders, and to the great diversion of the King and Queen. Which dance being ended, the Prince brought his fair partner in his hand, up to the Queen, who said many gracious things to

her; and, certes, for either high or solemn dancing, there was none that excelled her.

After the dancing, Richard, the King's minstrel, sang to the harp one of Maister Henry's best ballads, which were so bright and cheering, raising up the spirits and the laughter of all present; and this, if it flowed not from the famous Helicon, certes, it might be supposed to have come thence, and all held that it well deserved the butt of sack, which his Highness had lately bestowed upon him.

There was not any banqueting, or late wassailling, this night in the hall; for, on the morrow was to be the great tournament, and the most sumptuous feasting yet given; and every one was willing to prepare for it by taking an early rest. And thus, after Ypocras, and wafers had been served, with the usual state, the King and Queen avoided the Great Chamber, for that night, followed by a goodly

train of estates and gentils. Each departed to his own bower; some to think on what had passed this day; others to forget that such a day had been; and others again, to watch for that, which was to come; since joy, or the hope of it, often makes the young as wakeful as habitual care doth the aged; and many there were, whom delightsome expectation of the finery and pomp they should display, or behold, to-morrow, kept sleepless, till the wayte had piped the third watch and longer, Knights and esquires, lovers and ladies, country folk, serving-men and waiting-women, many a one; and all impatiently looked for the coming hour; but specially the young knights thought how they should triumph, in all the pride of prowess, before their courted fair ones; and doubted not, that the happiness of their whole lives depended upon the coming day.

And thus the prompt feelings of youth gave shape and colour and consequence to small circumstances, wrought into visions of their own imagination; all vivid and expansive now, but which would be dim and cold and contracted, as their sun should decline. But woe to him, who would have taught them to detect these bright illusions, which belong to youth, as do the golden lights and songs of joy to morning! Woe to him, who would have set before their eyes the severe form of experience, and have reduced the gaieties of their boundless hope to the many chequered scene of real existence! All in its season, comes the noon-tide ray, and melts the beauteous visions of the morning; all in its season, comes the evening ray, when lengthened shadows fall on the long landscape—when the purple cloud loses its golden edge, and the world below sinks into shade, which leads again to the bright

tints of dawn—to the brighter, oh! how much brighter tints of a cloudless and limitless dawn! Are we, who would derange this order, and cast the hue of twilight before the morning or the noon-tide sun, better sighted than the Wisdom and the Beneficence which have ordained it otherwise? We may watch and regulate—to do this is our duty; and let us neither omit it by careless and total indulgence, nor spare our vigilance by total proscription;—gradually we may prepare the mind for the great truths, that time will cast over the thousand hues of hope and joyance; and gradually a sense of the vanity and nothingness of this fleeting part of an eternal existence, instead of being a melancholy, will be a complacent perception, more than reconciling us to the shortness of its imperfect joys and deeply consoling us for its sorrows.

THE SEVENTH DAY.

THE SEVENTH DAY.

HERE was a drawing of a field of tournament, bordering on the lake, beyond which appeared the towers and lake of Kenilworth. A procession of knights, before a lady, drawn in a stately car, was moving round the field, trumpeters on horseback going before them, and dancing figures following. On the opposite side of the lawn, other knights appeared at a barrier, on whom seemed directed the chief attention of the company in the numerous tents and galleries around; who stood up, and leaned over one another, in their eagerness to view what was passing, or approaching.

Below, on the margin, stood a King crowned, in his robes, designed for King Henry; for it bore resemblance to his image in brass, placed on his monument in the Abbey of Saint Peter, called the West Minster.

THE SEVENTH DAY.

BUT, before rehersing the events of this day, let us not forget the night, which the poor merchant passed in his prison. There, when all noise in the castle had ceased, and sleep, as he thought, rested on every eye save his own, it was said he heard, at first, sounds of the most mournful warning, and, afterwards, others so sweet passed by his turret, as seemed to remember him, that not for any crime was he condemned, but for the grief and generous indignation, which had urged him to point out the murderer of his friend and kinsman. It seemed as if the image of that

friend stood before him, not wounded, and with face of wretchedness, such as of late his memory had been haunted with, but with look of heavenly peace and kindness. Woodreeve knew this image was only in his fancy; yet, as the sounds went by, it seemed to stand more clearly there, and to smile on him with so benign a feeling, as imparted hope and comfort to his heart. He wept, but not in suffering sorrow; his tears were now such as hush the mind in deepest stillness, and strengthen and refresh it, like as the dew of heaven the withered herb.

The day of this great tournay, to which the King had invited lords and gentils, far and wide, was now come; and all was bustle and expectation in the castle and country round. It was a pleasant day to behold, and most fresh and sweet was the forest-air to those, who came prancing through it, and delightsome were those

shades of green and red and orange-tawney, that over canopied the way, and seemed in stately mournfulness to bid farewell to summer. The redbreast, piping his lonely song amongst the leaves, seemed to have stolen their livery, and hardly could he be distinguished from the beechen bough, on which he sat. Thus stood the beech, the elm and chesnut, the slender ash, and lordly plane. Not so, with mark of past prime, stood the oak; warrior of winter—he yet stretched forth his mighty limbs, clad in strong verdure, to defy frost and storm, and, when he should doff it, to brave, in his crimson surcoat, even old Yule, when, with shrill whistle on the sharp north, he should come to scatter snows on his tawney crest.

It were most soothing now to melancholize under these shades, and think on many things in air and earth, real and unreal, that fly the lightsome noon; and

thus might you ruminate, till time should bring you to the verge of your part in it, without your perceiving, that he was carrying you on your way, all reckless of its better use; so stilly would it move beneath this quiet gloom. But those, who passed through the forest-tracks this day, went with the swift foot of hope and high spirits; they came not to melancholize: and a greater number of coursers, palfries, hobbies, and other steeds never, ywis, tramped on the ground of Ardenn.

Ever since the first dawn, you might espy them passing among the woods from towns, and villages and hamlets and monasteries, whither they had gathered over-night; and now drawing on towards Kenilworth, and the castle, where, over the great gate, hung the helmet of invitation to all courteous knights, a summons not slighted by any, whether courteous and knightly, or hum-

bly and civilly curious, or rude and forward.

It was in a fair meadow, which some call a plain, below the castle, on the opposite side of the moat, that this tournament was appointed; as a place where the Queen and her ladies might behold it from the castle, if the autumn weather should forbid them to be present: but all that great space was prepared and set forth at the sides, with tents, and stages, and galleries, as if nought might keep them away; the whole hung with arras, or cloth of gold. These you might see from the towers and walls of the castle; nay, from the bay-window of the great hall, standing like a little town of palaces and castles; for so were many of the tents, fashioned in the midst of the woods, which rose up on all sides, around them, save where the lake spread its broad light to the foot of

the Swan Tower and the rampart-walks: and, certes, it was a noble sight to see those pavilions ranged around the open meadow, all amongst the green shades, with vanes and banners glittering in the sun, spreading to the very edge of the water, which there lay, smooth and bright as polished silver, and giving back this glorious vision.

And then again, to those in the field the castle itself was a goodly sight, with all its towers and battlements thronged with faces; the great banner of England, waving on the Keep, and over-topping even the forest-trees behind; the whole pictured forth on those sleeping waters, as if falling into the blue deep below. Every parapet, or tower, or rampart, where foot could stand, or arm could cling, was clothed with living forms, and every window and little grate was full of watching eyes, and showed shoulder beyond shoulder, and

herd crowding over head, looking towards the field, with an eagerness, that made all below, who had seen them, turn their eyes the same way, and feel yet a stronger eagerness for the spectacle they were expecting. Even behind the loop-holes there were faces; some of them, I ween, such as had never looked out there before; the darts of these warriors not being in their hands, but in their eyes.

Those in the castle could hear the trumpets blow up amain, and see the heralds on their great horses riding about the place of contest, before the knights appeared; and could clearly discern the different tents, and make out to whom each belonged. The king's pavilion of scarlet cloth of gold was raised on a platform, above every other, and stood in the centre of that half-circle, formed by the rest. The platform was covered with silken carpets; and there, in front of the pavi-

lion, but just within the canopy, were placed two state-chairs for their Highnesses. The curtains were drawn up in large folds, held up with golden ropes; and within them were showed seat above seat, filled with ladies of the court, gorgeously apparelled, awaiting the royal train: and below, on either hand, were ranged esquires and pages in the King's livery. Over this tent played the royal banner; and the vanes showed the King's crest, glittering almost as high.

On the right of this was the pavilion of the young Prince Edward; but his was raised only by a few steps above the turf. It was of green and white silk, not in any feigned fashion, but in that, which belongeth to tents in war; and it had a golden lion on the top for a vane. On the left of the King's pavilion, raised only one step from the turf, was that appointed for the great officers of state,

when they were dismissed from standing about his Highness's chair; and for other nobles of the realm, with whom were some bishops, but not in their state, though the King were present; and some abbots, also not in their state. Near this was the tent of the Baron de Blondeville, of white and azure, having for the crest an armed hand with a javelin poised in it, ready to strike at a shield.

It were tedious to tell of all the different pavilions and galleries, adorned with velvets and rich tapestries, that spread so gloriously round this fair meadow; or of the ladies, so sumptuously arrayed, that appeared within, delighting the hearts of all who beheld them.

But the tent of the challengers, whose chief was William de Fortibus, Earl of Aumerle, standing at the eastern barrier; and that of the defenders, whose leader was the Lord Simon de Montfort, nigh

the western barrier, deserve notice. The Earl of Aumerle's was shaped like a castle, beset with gilded turrets and bastions, the entrance gate showing a lofty arch, hung round with goodly trappings of purple velvet, 'broidered and fringed with gold; and having within, hangings and seats of the same. But my Lord of Montfort's outdid this glittering pomp; his tent was in shape of a princely palace, yet with walls and towers, approaching in some sort to a castle. The entrance was into a bannered hall, with stately crimson and gold beneath the banners; and of crimson and gold were the seats and cushions. Figures in armour stood round that hall, as though he would assert himself a warrior and a prince; and truly King Henry needed such, if he might find them true to him.

The lists were forty feet wide, and they ran nearly the whole length of the field.

On the outside of them was a raised space to keep off the crowd, which was guarded by knights and their esquires, in armour, but bearing no weapons; and so, too, were the barriers guarded. These knights, as well as all the attendants of the combatants, had taken an oath not to assist either by word, look, or gesture, any of the combatants, not even when wounded and unhorsed, except as the Marshal of the Field should allow; but this oath was not on pain of death, as at trial by combat, in law.

The eastern barrier was for the entrance of the challengers, with the lady-prize; the western was for the defenders. At these points of the field were the greatest press and throng of the people; amongst whom, to wile away their time of waiting, ran many stories of the deeds of some of the knights expected.

Anon, the heralds, who were riding

about the place of war, drew aside to the barriers, and their trumpets blew up aloud for a long space, summoning the lords and knights, challengers and defenders, to the field, in manner of war, with such a stirring sound, that no man could abide in the castle, that thought he could get one foot into the field of tournay; but all ran speedily thither, not one allowing, in spite of eye-sight, that it was impossible to find the smallest space, not already filled. And then many, that had been on the walls, would fain have been back there again, for scarcely a glimpse could they get of the field; the fencing, the pikemen, and the horsemen being so deep around it, that the nearest to them had but a sorry peep. And, as for the stages and galleries, raised up for those, who came first, or who had some favour, they had been filled for hours, some having taken their seats there at sun-rise.

Presently, the heralds were answered by the King's trumpets afar, which drew near and nearer, until they came into the plain, and took their station before the King's pavilion, still blowing up, with their banners displayed. There, rode two King's at arms, Garter and Clarencieux: then was every eye turned thither in expectation of what might follow; and presently came into their tent the King and Queen, with a long train of nobles, and ladies, and took their seats on the chairs prepared for them, standing a little out on the platform.

His Highness, this day, wore armour, and was attended by the four esquires of the body. His helmet, with the vizor open, was circled with a crown, surmounted by a crescent, encompassing a blazing star.

The Queen was in purple and palle, and on her head she wore a crown of jewels. The Lady Cornwall, her sister, was cere-

moniously apparelled with a coronet of pearls; as was the Lady Pembroke-Montfort, her sister, whose lord was, this day, to enter the lists. All the ladies present were ceremoniously attired, with fillets in their hair, or garlands, each according to her rank. And amongst those who stood by the Queen's chair, none looked more lovely than the young Baroness de Blondeville; her head was circled with costly pearls, and she wore a thin scarf of silver azure, drawn over her breast, the colour of her lord's banner.

Soon as the King and Queen were placed, the trumpets at the barriers sounded a charge, and a great many of nobles and knights entered the field. Amongst them was the young Prince Edward; for he liked not to ride alone, in the order that had been settled for him, but came in pesle-mesle with the rest, and so busy with his mettlesome steed, that he noticed

not the observance which, nathless all the hurly-burly, was paid to him by those, who rode near him.

Cased in complete armour and mounted on a brave charger, he came, accompanied by his brother Edmund, a noble youngster, apparelled in mail, to witness the disport, though not to share it; sorely against his will was Prince Edward restrained from trying to break a lance this day. His heart beat high for martial deeds. The King and the Queen joyed to see him sit his horse as manfully, as did any knight in the field; and the Queen, although it was by her especial command that he forbore to try his skill with others of his age, looked on him, with even more delight, than his father. In him she might have foreseen the corrector of such insults as were afterwards given to her by the citizens of London, when, by hurling of stones at her from the bridge, as she was

flying by water from the tower, almost for her very life, they stayed her for a time, from her purpose of repairing to the palace at Sheen. And in him too she might have foreseen the queller of rebellion, the corrector of abuses, the restorer of general order, the enactor of wise laws, the administrator of justice, the mighty ruler, who, by his wisdom and vigorous perseverance, bound up the wounds of his country, strengthened its sinews, and pruned away its exuberant vices, which the tyranny and weakness of King John had by turns provoked and encouraged; and which the incapacity of Henry had suffered to engraft themselves on and to encumber almost every useful institution."

This young Prince, in whose character yet lay hid the virtues which were hereafter to restore the kingdom, now came into the field with high spirits; and, hav-

ing, paid his duty before the King's pavilion, took his station. Perchance, it was with remembrance of his delight in this tournay, that, in after-times, when he hisself was King, he caused that magnificent feast of chivalry to be enacted here, which brought a hundred knights and as many ladies to give more fame to Kenilworth, for, they trooped to that festival from all parts, even from over sea, to witness its splendours and to increase them: yet did he not, I ween, delight so much in that, as in this present, now before his eyes, when all was new to them and wore the gloss of his own youth.

Soon after Prince Edward had so placed himself, the Baron de Blondeville appeared; and none came on with a more gallant air, (the white plume depending aside his cap to show the easy sway, with which he adapted himself to the curvetings of his managed horse,) or rose on his stirrups—

with more courageous grace than he; and the whispers and smiles of the ladies seemed to say this: the young Baroness, proud of his affection, and of his distinction, looked on, with beating heart and with tearful smile. Having paid reverence to the King and Queen, his banner was bowed also before his bride, and he saluted her with a homage, that seemed to say he was ambitious only to prove himself worthy of her love.

In this magnificent show, it was a question, which most excelled in gorgeous array, or seemed most proudly conscious, the knights, the ladies, or the coursers.

And now the trumpets, without the barriers, sounded a charge; for the challengers drew nigh the field, and were answered by others already there. Then it was, that neither Prince Edward nor his steed could longer endure restraint, so that both set off full tilt, coursing the

plain, round and round, with most courageous bearing, the latter prancing, curveting, bounding, to the great joy of all, who beheld him, save the Queen. Her Highness, though herself of good courage and well skilled, for her sex, to manage her horse, feared he would be thrown headlong from his charger, while he rejoiced, with firm hand and steady eye, to urge, to watch and to command the strength and spirit of the noble animal.

A loud murmur of applause ran from tent to tent and from tower to tower, afar; and then might it be said the warlike people began to feel for their Prince the affection and respect, which hereafter assisted him to rule them. Where this curveting would have ended, none knew, for, the Prince was nothing weary, had not the appearance of the challengers at the barrier checked his career, when he turned slowly towards the King's tent,

sitting his charger with a proud negligence, as he looked back on the approaching knights.

Now, the Lord Marshall of the field, the Earl of Norfolk, richly apparelled in arms, and with his truncheon in his hand, riding a brave horse, right bravely trapped, and attended by his king at arms, heralds and poursuivants, rode up to the eastern barrier, and, in the King's name, demanded of the champion, abiding there, completely armed, whence he came, who he was, and the cause of the grief that brought him hither thus clad in steel.

To which he made answer, his herald, with his banner, standing at his side. "I am William de Fortibus, Earl of Aumerle;" and then he delivered his challenge, engrossed on embossed vellum, in which he defied to arms any one, who should deny the peerless beauty of his lady-love. Then the Lord Marshall made

him undo his vizor, that it might appear he had rightly called himself; which being done, the knights, his aids, did the same. Then was administered to the champion and all his followers the oath, that they came not armed with any spell, or word, or other instrument of magic, but with lawful arms only. After which, the knights of the Lord Mareschal and those, who guarded the lists, took oath also, not to assist either champion, during single combat, by word, look, or gesture.

This ended, the Earl of Hereford, High Constable of England, who stood by with his staff of office, ordered the barrier to be thrown open; and forthwith the herald of the champion, attended by his poursuivants, to the number of four, entered the lists, the herald bearing his banner, and standing aside, where he proclaimed, with potent voice, the name and titles

of his lord, and whereupon he came hither in array.

Having done this, he threw down the gauntlet, and advanced to the tree of honour, where he placed the written words of the challenge on a bough, and where also were suspended the shielded arms of all the knights, who, this day, meant to run their course of chivalry on the field. Then straight the Earl of Aumerle and his followers were admitted to the field, bearing up the King's flag, nearly in the state and order as here set down. First, came, in solemn march, eight trumpeters, four abreast, blowing up amain, in their yellow tabards and high caps, their banner rolls displayed; then cornets, drums and clarioners, in warlike fashion. Then came twelve knights armed, two and two, on foot. Next came the banner of the King's Highness, carried by a knight completely

armed, and borne up by four other knights armed, but bareheaded, each having his two shield-knaves (now called by most, shield-bearers, or esquires) beside him, carrying his spear, shield and helmet. Then followed eight knights, appointed like the first, each with his two knaves, bearing his helmet and shield; then forty yeomen, in doublets of scarlet and gold, bearing their partizans upright, their coats broidered with a golden lion and the King's crown above, surmounted with a crescent and blazing star. Then followed two score of demi-lances, four and four.

Next came four trumpeters on horseback, blowing up; then four esquires; then a herald at arms; then the banner of the Lord Mareschal, borne high by a knight armed, four esquires walking beside it. Then appeared the Lord Mareschal his-self in complete harness, mounted on

a barbed steed, right nobly and gorgeously trapped, with crimson velvet, embossed with gold and the shielded arms of his lord; esquires and pages going beside and following.

Then came, in separate order, the champion's five knights, his aids, armed cap-a-pé, mounted on goodly coursers, richly trapped, each having his banner borne before him, and four trumpeters blowing up; also with esquires and pages in his livery.

The Earl was cased in gorgeous armour, bossed with silver and laid in with gold. His helmet bore a scarlet plume and, for his crest, a winged griffin of solid gold, as were the bars of his vizor. The head-piece and breast-plate of his steed were bossed in like manner, as was the shaffroone and crivet for the neck; and the high pummels of his saddle were also edged with gold. Over this lord was borne by

four esquires on horseback, wearing his livery, a silken canopy, the colours of his tent, fringed also with gold and surmounted by his crest, in silver.

And now were heard sounds of sweet minstrelsy, and, immediately following the champion, came the minstrels and the lady-prize, seated in a chair, covered with crimson cloth of gold of Florence, having a canopy of crimson silk, bearing a white plume, which played upon the air, and drawn by four milk-white harts, for so they seemed. Each was led by a page apparelled in rose-coloured silk, striped with gold, and holding in his hand his cap of velvet, wreathed with roses, and laced with gold. Their buskins were all of swan-down white as snow. These milk-white harts had their horns tipped with gold and hung with roses, with chainlets of the same round their necks. The reins were of crimson silk, studded with

gold and precious stones, as were the traces. Within this so sumptuous car sat the Lady Aveline de Bohun, daughter of the Lord Constable, the Earl of Hereford. She was beautiful as morning, rising from the sea; her look was peace and joy. She wore a robe of palest silver, and her hair was coronetted with eglantine, in bloom, and with pearls, that night might have scattered. In front of the crimson canopy above her, beamed a diamond star of purest splendour. Four knights walked beside her car. And thus she came on to the sound of dulcimers and harps, with her maidens playing on timbrels and lutes and sweet bells. Ever and anon they stepped dancing-wise, tossing the tabors on high and turning with so sweet a grace, as was the marvel and delight of the whole court; although many present liked them not the better, for that they were of the Queen's country. Still, as this lady passed,

welcome, peace, and joy, spread around her: she was called the Lady of the Morning Star.

Then followed a goodly train of esquires, and gallant youngsters, in shining trim, wearing the livery of this Earl, to the number of twenty-five, riding on noble steeds; their trappings glittering in the sun, and tinkling with silver bells, that made merriment as they advanced. After them forty of the Lord Aumerle's yeomen, on foot, appeared in his livery, with his badge in silver, on their sleeves.

And thus, with proud paces, these processions passed on the field of tournament, till they reached the King's tent; and then they halted and did homage.. So fair and pleasant a show was never seen before in woods of Ardenn. The crowds on the castle-walls beheld the whole order of it, and better than many that were nearer; yet were they not contented; and often,

as the shouts of the people mingled with the clangour of the trumpets, they bemoaned themselves, that they were so far off. Yet those on the level of the field, beheld not half of the show at once. Three times that gorgeous train moved round the field, to the sound of trumpets and other brave instruments; never failing, each time, their homage at the King's tent. From the very top-most turrets, those there perched, could see this processioning; the sun glittering on the armour of the knights, and glancing on their crests and helmets and on the heads of their spears, as they moved.

They could see, when the procession had the third time reached the King's pavilion, that it rested to deliver up the lady-prize unto the fair company there assembled, to remain in safe custody, till the end of the tournay. They could perceive her approach the Queen, who turned

graciously towards her, and that then she retired amongst the crowd of ladies, behind her Highness's chair. This done, they saw the Lord Mareschal, with four knights, advancing towards the centre of the field, in front of the grand pavilion, there to plant the King's great banner; but they could not see every one of the ceremonies, that attended this, nor hear the chaunt of the minstrels, which accompanied each part of them, though they caught the swelling strain of the louder minstrelsy; and on every charge of the trumpets and every shout of joy, did they set up fresh lamentation.

"If I was but in that tree," said one. "how much nearer I should be." "Why do not you see," said another, "the branches are so full already they can scarcely bear up the people? they will break presently, and tumble them into the lake." "But look," said another "if there is not the

roof of the Swan Tower, with neither man, woman, nor child, upon it. Oh! if I was but there, I could see and hear every thing; I will try for it." "You may as well stay, where you are," observed a fourth; "you may be sure, if the roof could be reached, it would have been full of people long ago."

Then would come a loud blast of the trumpets and a great huzza, but nobody could tell what it was about. "Why this is worse than seeing nothing at all, to be tantalized in this way," says one. Then another spies out some friend, at a distance in a valuable place, as he thinks, and hallooes out with might and main, "Can you make any room for me in that tree? Do my good Hodge. If you cannot, speak to Ralph for me; he will, I know." Straight, some score of faces are turned at his shout, but his friend maketh not out that he is spoken to; all hear him but his friend; till another shout comes amain on

the wind: "Hodge o' the Chase-side, I say, can you make any room for me?" and then a dismal "No!" silences the non-content, and makes those laugh, whom he would have left behind; and thus they went on murmuring, and wasting what pleasure they might have had, because they could not have all, just like their betters; for thus it is in life, that we often employ our wits only to turn good to evil.

Those below, at the castle-windows, ladies and gentlewomen, who could not get places in the tents, or on the galleries in the field, murmured too; but not so much for that they could not see every thing there, though that seemed to be their grief, but that they could not their-selves be seen, dressed as they were in apparel, which they had gotten from Coventry, long before. They saw plainly enough knights, esquires and pages, prancing, or pacing, about the field, in all their splendour; and

lady-aunts and lady-cousins in the galleries, in all their sheen and joyance, and fain would they have shared with them. Some too there were, who spied out their knights looking towards the windows, yet were they unable, for the crowd there, to make themselves distinguished; and some few there were who, often as he, that each esteemed, advanced, in glorious seeming, shrunk back, with timid glance, fearing lest they should be noticed.

Above them all, perched in his prison-turret, was the poor merchant, looking upon this splendid field, with different eyes from every other that beheld it. Too little interest had he in what was passing there, to view it with curiosity. No vanity had he to make him feel the jealousy of rivalship, or the fretfulness of disappointment, where all around was pomp and pride, or mortification, or joy, from another's triumph; or aught but sense

of his own misery and fond remembrance of his home. The weight of grievous evils left him no leisure to feel the pressure of small ones. How blessed would he have thought himself, were it possible for him to have considered, as disappointments and causes of murmur, any of those trifling circumstances, which now prevented the peace and joy of hundreds, possessing here health and liberty and prosperous estate, now looking on the same spot with himself!

He had been lying on his pallet, thinking on his hard fate and on that of his dead friend, when first he heard the trumpets blow up, and the hum of many voices from walls and battlements and tents below; and, judging this to be some pageant pertaining to the marriage festivities of his triumphant enemy, he had no heart to witness it. But anon, this noise of trumpets, with the heavy trampling of hoofs

on the field and the loud ringing of the harness, and, at times, the shouts of the multitude roused him from his weighty sorrows; and, looking through his little grate, he, perched so high in air, like a poor bird shut up in prison-cage, looked down upon that field of warlike seeming and princely magnificence.

There he beheld the King's dreaded person, on whose single word life, or death, depended, sitting calmly in his estate, and right glad of heart, thoughtless of the suffering he now inflicted, or reckless of it, having persuaded his weak and willing mind it was just. There, too, he could distinguish the Baron de Blondeville, caressed and honoured by his Sovereign, admired by the court and loved by his fair bride. Then, as the memory of all that had passed in the woods beyond, returned to Woodreeve, his very heart bled, while he beheld, as he too well believed,

the guilty author of his woe, standing amongst honourable men and gallant combatants, attended by a noble train, and ready to achieve the fame of noble deeds in arms.

Now, the challenger and his five knights, directed by the Lord Constable and Lord Mareschal, having planted the King's banner in the centre of the field, the Earl of Norfolk delivered unto each his lance, and they withdrew to the Tree of Honour, standing on a little hillock, raised near the King's pavilion and bearing on its boughs the shields of all the knights, who offered themselves, this day, for the lists. There they pointed to the words of the challenge, which having done, they retired in procession to the eastern barrier, where their tent and the empty car of the lady-prize stood, there to await the appearance of the defenders. And not long did they wait, ere they heard the trumpets sound-

ing without the western barrier, which were well answered by those within, and straight appeared the chief defender, with his five knights, all clad in white harness. These, having passed through the same ceremonies, as had been already performed by the challengers, and a herald having proclaimed the name of their chief in the field, having hung his words of defiance on the tree of honour, and taken up the gauntlet of the champion, their procession entered.

And here it were tedious to set down all the particular splendours and doings of it; but some things may be told, both to be a record of certain remarkable appearances and also to show some traces of the characters of the chief persons, who played their part in this pageant.

The chief of the defenders, as has already been rehersed, was the Lord Simon de Montfort, the same whom the King's

Highness had created Earl of Leicester, and on whom he had bestowed his widowed sister, the Countess of Pembroke, with this his stately castle and wide domain of Kenilworth; how worthily it needs not for this history to declare, since it is known to all, that he armed this very fortress against his King and benefactor. He, this day, wore on his scarf the Lady Pembroke's colour, and he was in truth her champion; his five knights were Sir Stephen de Segrave, Sir John de Plesset, Sir William de Cantalupe, Sir Robert de Grendon, and Sir Osbert d'Abrissecourt, a foreign man.

And, first of these, after heralds at arms, duely appointed, esquires and pages in pairs, and, after his raised banner, all in form and order much like to the procession of the challengers, came Sir Stephen de Segrave. He was on a stately charger, trapped with flame-coloured velvet, bossed

with his arms and hung round with little lions, in silver, such being his crest; his horse white and heavy, with broad chest, whose head-stalls and bridles were studded with precious stones. The lion on his helmet was rampant, and his plume and scarf of flame colour. Four esquires walked beside him, followed by four pages; leading spare coursers. Then came twenty-five gentlemen, clad in the colour of his scarf and having also flame-coloured plumes in their caps. Fifty of his yeomen, apparelled in the same hue, but of different fashion, followed; and a crowd of his servants closed his pageant. He was of lofty stature and surpassing strength, and moved upon the field with looks of sullen pride. Some present augured not well from this, and indeed his pride was so plain, that King Henry liked it not.

Next came Sir John de Plesset, Earl of Warwick, of most graceful person and de-

meanour, though he was a stranger, being Earl of Warwick only by right of his wife, who was sole heiress of that house and by the King's courtesy. He was mounted on a noble roan, whose breast-plate was chased with silver; and he was most gallantly caparisoned. His plume and scarf were of rose-colour, and the crest on his helmet was a leopard. He came attended by a brave show of esquires and gallants, with a train of fifty yeomen, besides forty servants, all in his livery of the colour of his scarf, and making a most stately show.

Then came Gaston, the young Baron de Blondeville, who had changed his cap for a helmet, and was duely caparisoned as a knight; for, his shield, which the King had caused to be replaced in the hall, had not again been challenged, nor had any one made complaint to the Lord Mareschal against him. He rode so fiery a charger as hardly might be restrained,

within the pace of dignity; yet, being curbed with his hand, he moved with proud and stately steps, well suited to his lord and master, who kept his seat, with gracious ease and looks of happy triumph, knowing he was admired of all, who saw him. His banner was well carried before him. Four esquires were at his side, and four pages, leading spare steeds, followed. Twenty-four gentlemen succeeded, and a goodly train of yeomen and servants, all in his livery of light blue and silver. brought up the rear. His plume and scarf were of azure, but not of the fullest hue, and his train of pages and servants, in the gallant fashion of their apparel, were outdone by none.

When he came opposite to the King's pavilion and paid his homage, his courser, whether he was frightened at aught he saw, or that he gloried in the loud noise of the King's trumpets, or that he was secretly

goaded for the purpose, began to curvet and play off such high tricks, as terrified the Lady Baroness sitting there. But after he had gone through certain paces and high threatenings, the Baron the while commanding him with unmoved countenance, he fell into a gentle mood, and followed, with due order, in this pageant chivalry.

And now came a knight in most curious device, riding upon what seemed to be a red dragon, conducted by one personating a giant, as he might well do, who bore in his hand a spear of immense size, which incontinently he applied to the dragon's throat, which forthwith sent forth fire and smoke, to the great diversion and delight of all beholders. Following him, a page led his courser richly caparisoned, and he was compassed all about with brave gallants and followers. This was no other than Sir William de Mowbray, who at all

times, was fond of mirth, and certes, he caused much; for, on his displaying himself, tents and walls and battlements and turrets, nay, the very trees, up to top-most bough, sent forth peals of joy and laughter. He was much beloved of the crowd, and well liked in the court, none envying him.

Next came Sir Hugh de Bois, mounted on an iron grey. His plume and scarf were of orange colour, and he was not wholly wanting in esquires and servants to fill up his estate; yet was he far from being on a par with the rest, his means being much smaller. So, I say not more of his appearance, seeing he made not much, when compared with others, on that day; only this I will add, he was of a most compassionate and honest nature; and might have vied with the rest, if he would have pressed harder upon his de-

pendants, or would have mortgaged his lands, as so many did, to the Jews.

Next and last, came the chief of the defenders, the Lord Simon de Montfort, in his estate, under a fair pavilion of silk, with turrets and battlements shaped like unto a castle, his banner flying over all. This was carried along by six stout men; but it appeared to be borne by a multitude of his servants, in purple jerkins of silk, laced with gold. His charger, trapped in purpled velvet, bossed with his arms in gold, was led by pages; and its frontlet and breast-plate were so brightly burnished, that, as the sun shone on them, the splendour cast around him was enough to dazzle, if it could not daunt, any knight, his adversary. And this was made ground of complaint against him by his first adversary in the lists; so that, when he began to place himself for combat, he was

commanded by the Lord Mareschal not to advance against the sun; but, in the changes and shiftings of the struggle, this command availed but little. Squires and gallants and pages followed almost without number.

Of kingly purple were the Lord Simon's plume and scarf; and his golden helmet seemed one blaze of light. He bore himself with a most lofty carriage; looking as though he thought none, but the King's Highness, might compare with him, and hardly that either. Not more audacious, I guess, could he have looked, when, in after-times, he traitorously gave his Sovereign Lord the lie, in the field at Evesham! and there paid with his life for his ingratitude, and rebellion.

Little weened King Henry now, when he saw before him this knight, arrayed in the pomp of chivalry, that he beheld one, who would hereafter turn his arms against

him, excite his subjects into rebellion, and lead him prisoner through his own kingdom, until his life and liberty should be rescued by his brave son, Edward, here beside him. Little weened his Highness of this, or he would not have raised him to highest honour; bestowing upon him that sister, who had withdrawn herself to convent-life, and taken the veil, but not yet the ring, that would have wedded her to it; else not even the Pope his-self might have sent her dispensation. Happier had she been in her peaceful cloister than living in the world, with so proud, yet base a spirit that could walk in arms against the Sovereign, who had lavished favours on him with so lavish hand? Yet were there some near his Highness's chair, who, from what they saw this day, could guess something of what high favours might work in him; the venerable Archbishop was one of these.

The defenders having passed in solemn pomp, three times, round the field, paying, each time, due homage at the King's pavilion, their chief received from the Lord Mareschal his lance, which had been duly measured with that of the chief challenger, and his shield from the Tree of Honour; and then the defenders withdrew to the western barrier, and took station before their own tent, till the summons of war should sound.

They waited not much, ere the trumpets blew up a charge loud and long, which set the hoofs of every steed in motion to prance and curvet, with proud impatience for the onset, so that hardly could the knights, whose turn was not yet come, rein in their arched necks. Then the Lord Constable of England, and the Lord Mareschal rode gravely round the lists, to see that all was right and in due order; and examined again the lances

of the two chiefs, who, upon the second charge of the trumpets, advanced each from his station, near the barriers, and, each crying out aloud the word of combat, given him by his lady, they ran together furiously.

The Lord Simon first brake his lance upon the Earl of Aumerle, shivering it into splinters, and with the blow making the Earl stagger on his courser. It was the marvel of all, that he fell not; but, adroitly recovering himself, he passed the sword-guard of the Lord Simon, and struck him on the chest, with a force, that made his armour flash fire, shivered his own lance into a thousand pieces, and had nigh brought his enemy, both man and horse, to the ground. Then the trumpets sounded, for victory, the cries of the people cheered him, and a murmuring sound of many voices rose from the King's pavilion.

A second round was run by these chiefs

with lances duly delivered to them, while tumultuous shoutings from the more distant spectators on the castle walls and towers and on the trees encouraged them, those nearer being kept in order by the laws of the field, which forbade any to make sign by word, or deed, during the time of combat. But the knights, who, in armour, kept the lists, found it no easy task to preserve silence there; for, as the fate of the battle swayed, so was the clamour of hope, or joy, ever ready to break forth; and it was well these knights carried not arms, lest they might have been provoked to turn them against the unruly people around them. Those afar off, on the walls, being beyond the reach of the laws, seemed to shout forth in very bravado, as if to revenge themselves by liberty of voice, for that which was denied them of a better view. And how incessantly they did peal forth, sending out

all the signs they could to either combatants, and calling loudly a "Fortibus," or a "Montfort," followed by hooting, or applause, just as their humours chanced!

The combat of these chiefs lasted, till each had broken on other several lances, but was at last decided, in favour of William de Fortibus, who unhorsed the Lord Simon and broke his shield.

Then was victory proclaimed by the heralds, to strains of minstrelsy, the name and titles of the victor being repeated, on every pause of the music, with these words, "Renown to heroes and to the sons of heroes." Immediately there rose from the lists cries of joyous triumph, and the woods resounded, far and wide, with the multitude of voices proclaiming the conqueror's name and "Renown to heroes." Convents, buried in the wilds of the forest, opened their gates, and let forth the startled monks, to listen to "Renown to he-

roes." Never had they heard such sounds, till then. Travellers from far, journeying through the forest and hearing such sounds of joy and triumph, where they expected only lonesome silence, or the joy of birds, looked round, on all sides, under the boughs; but, seeing nothing, save the sun-light, and the farther woods, that close them in, they feared this might be some witchery to deceive them. Coming, perchance, to village, or hamlet, of the forest, they ask what mean these sounds, of aged men, or little children, the only inhabitants left there, and whose opposite extremes of life alike disabled them from following to Kenilworth. And then, having learned somewhat near the truth, the travellers urge their weary hobbies over deep roads, at the risk of their necks, that they may come in for a glimpse of the spectacle of chivalry. So they leave behind these lonesome cottagers to the quietness,

which (ah! ungrateful man!) they now think dreary, and would fain exchange for the many pains of another entrance into crowded life; the distant shouts tantalize the curiosity of the young, and bring back the regrets of the aged; the old man reflecting on his long-past youth, and the child anticipating his, when he shall no longer be left at home, while his elder brothers go to fairs and to Kings' tournaments.

These shoutings of the multitude and the clamour of "Renown to heroes," recalled to his prison-bars the poor merchant, who, on sight of the Baron de Blondeville, prancing in procession amongst the defenders, had, in the bitterness of his heart, withdrawn and thrown himself on his pallet, there to calm his throbbing spirit. Returned to the barred window, he there beheld that, which he could not well understand, not having witnessed the

combat. This was William de Fortibus courteously returning his lance to the Lord de Montfort, together with the golden chain of his mistress, which he had worn on his shield in combat; at which rose up fresh shoutings of applause, but both were received by the vanquished with a very ill grace; and his countess might rejoice that she was not known to have bestowed this chain upon a conquered knight.

This ended, the chiefs withdrew, each to his own tent, and then advanced four knights, two of each party, and ran their courses together. They combated with strong spears, of great breadth, and ran with most courageous skill, to the wonder of all beholders. It were hard to say, until the very last, which of the four most excelled; but then, at last, one knight of each party bore away the prize, worn on the helmet, or shield, of his adversary, to

whom it had been given by the lady of his love.

Next advanced to single combat the Baron de Blondeville and Sir Robert de Grendon. On sight of the Baron, Woodreeve turned from his grate, and his heart sickened to behold the assassin appear before the whole court and the multitude of the people, arrayed for triumph, or, at least, for honour. Yet might it not be so; for, the triumph, and even the honour might attend his adversary. It was, however, long before such possibility occurred to Woodreeve; soon as it did, he resolved to abide the sight of the contest, yet were his fears much stronger than his hopes.

And now the trumpets blew up the field, and the onset began. They fought with spears, and such was the shock of the first encounter, that both knights were nearly unhorsed. At the second course, the Baron brake his spear on his opponent.

At the third course, Sir Robert shivered his on the Baron's shield. Then, they ran with lances, or long spears, and the shock, with which they met, brought both combatants to the ground. The Baron quickly recovered himself, and, as some thought, made a blow at his adversary, ere he was fully risen. On this, there was a great outcry, and the Lord Mareschal rode up, and stood before the King's tent, but said nought. Then, the King commanded, that the combat should proceed. On this, there was a murmur of discontent; but, each knight being now remounted, it did accordingly proceed. Some said Sir Robert had received the Baron's blow on his head; others said it had missed him; Woodreeve now, as he watched, thought he sat not steadily on his courser.

However this might be, his horse tournayed, and passed with him along the lists, to meet the Baron, like unto a glance

of lightning. The Baron, now well prepared to meet him, sustained the shock, and the combat was renewed with such force, as though it were but just begun. It lasted not long. Sir Robert seemed to support himself with difficulty, and sometimes almost to stagger on his steed; and, at the last course, he sank beneath the Baron's blow, and fell to the earth. Then he was borne away to his tent, and his armour unbraced, and the tale went, that he had been hurt unfairly.

The Baron, having snatched from the shield of his enemy his mistress's pledge of favour, a tress of her hair, bore it triumphantly on the point of his lance unto the King's tent, where sat with the Queen the Lady Baroness, his wife, and presented it to her. Then their Highnesses said many gracious things to the victor, and many noble ladies there assembled testified their joy no less. Then was his

name proclaimed, as victor, by the heralds, and his song of triumph chaunted round the King's banner.

The poor merchant, from his turret, seeing how matters went, and that nought but applause and honour seemed to follow the steps of him, who, in justice, deserved only shame and punishment, felt as if his last hope was gone. His pang of sorrow was at the uttermost. He turned from his grate, sickening even at the pleasant light of the sun, and once more he threw himself upon his pallet.

But why do the trumpets now blow up so loud a charge, so shrill and dread, that all, which went before, was sleep and silence in comparison of it? No shoutings mingled with this charge, nor was any other sound heard contending with it in the vault of the sky, where it rolled alone. So long it lasted, that it roused the pri-

soner again from his pallet, and recalled him to the window.

Thence beheld he, in the field below, not among the combatants, but among the spectators there, an extraordinary turmoil, and a sort of solemn, or fearful, curiosity very different from that which they had before showed. Their faces were all turned one way, that was towards the place whence the sounds came, which was not from the heralds at arms. In all the tents the company were standing up, but none there, or in spots more exposed to his view, seemed satisfied, that they knew what was going forward. On the place of combat, the prisoner saw only the Lord Mareschal and the Constable of England riding about, and the heralds gathering at the barriers, to answer the summons (of which it seemed there would not, for a long time, be an end), and the knights,

who kept the lists, watching for one to enter.

At last, Woodreeve saw, at the eastern barrier, a knight enter, armed cap-a-pé, mounted on a black charger. There, the Mareschal, who was ready, demanded in the most urgent terms, who he was, whom he came to challenge, and what was his cause of grief? What was answered, those only, who stood nigh the barrier, might know; but the stranger's herald was seen to raise a banner before the Mareschal's eyes, that he stood gazing on, like one amazed! while the knights of the barriers drew eagerly round him; when the Lord Mareschal again demanded, why he came? The knight his-self made a sign in the air with his lance, and held it raised; and, during the wonderment, which this spread around, a herald, not waiting for order, but moved by his own notions and fears, admininistered to him

the oath, that he came not armed with any unlawful weapons, or means of harm; after which, the stranger-knight dropped the lance into its rest.

The Mareschal seemed still to marvel and to be at a loss, how he should proceed; but then, recollecting himself, he advanced close to the knight, as is the custom, to unclasp his visor, that it might appear he had spoken the truth, as to who he was: but he, drawing back, his-self unclosed it. What face the Mareschal discovered within, the prisoner, from his turret, could not know; but he saw both the Mareschal and the Lord Constable turn aside their steeds, and the knights of the barrier step back; while a tumultuous noise arose amongst the pikemen behind the barrier, as if they expected the stranger would attempt to retreat, and they intended to oppose him.

But he showed, that he meditated not

any such thing; for, swift as an arrow from a bow, he cleared the barrier; and, having done so, moved upon the field of war gloomily and sullen, like unto a thunder cloud, spreading terror as he passed. All the multitude of voices was hushed around him; and the air was so still, that nothing was heard but the sound of his charger's steps; and, sometimes, the unknown trumpets sending their clangour to roll away amongst the woods.

His banner was borne highly before him, in good state, and with ceremony of demeanour; but what it displayed the prisoner could not, at his height, discern; neither could he see the face, nor the crest, of the stranger. As he advanced, a murmuring ran through the crowd, mingled with faint shrieks; but, when he was present, an interval of hushed silence followed; as if suspense and wonder held the breath of every gazer. Slowly, but strait

and with due steps, as showed an accomplished knight, the stranger rode up to the King's pavilion, and there stayed his horse, yet making no sign nor gesture, nor having even his banner lowered by his herald. Immediately Woodreeve perceived a rising up, and some confusion in the pavilion; the King motioned with his arm; the Archbishop made a sign in the air; some of the nobles, who stood round his Highness's chair, pressed forward—others drew back; and those behind, seemed to move to and fro in disorder.

The Queen and her attendants appeared no less agitated; her Highness turned away her face from the stranger-knight; all her ladies on the seats behind, rose up, and some so eagerly leaned forward, that they had nigh overbalanced themselves, and fallen down to the platform. The Baron de Blondeville, who, after his course and triumph, still rested, beside the pavi-

lion, sat fixed on his courser, with his arm holding his spear on high.

Those on the field saw upon the knight's banner the image of a murder; they saw, too, upon his black helmet, a wing of fire, for a crest; but what his face was they knew not; for his visor was now closed; and his eyes only appeared above the flat bars of it; and they, it was said by many of the beholders, gleamed like flame. Some went so far as to say, though they saw too little to warrant such guess, he was the same who had appeared in the banquet hall; others thought not so, and eagerly denied it.

On the banner was a motto, which greatly disturbed the King; for, soon as he saw it, he called for the Lord Mareschal and the Lord Constable, and his own trumpets sounded a summons. My lords, the Mareschal and Constable, were still at the eastern barrier, the confusion there

having detained them, and very great it was, though no one, at the distance of the King's tent, knew the cause of it; not a foot having stirred from that barrier of all, who witnessed the first turmoil, on the approach of this so strange an intruder.

Every one there was either too busy, or too curious, to run to spread the half-known news. Some, who had been thrust aside after their first glimpse, said the Mareschal had fallen off his charger; others, that he was dead; and others again, that he was held in thraldom of the Lord Constable, and the knights at the barrier; which last was but an unlikely tale. But let this pass; whatever the cause was, there he was at the time when the stranger-knight, advancing a few steps nearer to the King's pavilion, did make somewhat of an obeisance, and then held up, far as his arm could reach, before his Highness, a sword of strange shape,

unknown in our tourneys; which, as some nigh affirmed, bore on the scabbard, in characters of fire, the word "Justice!"

Whether this were so or not, on sight of that sword, the King was sore disturbed; and straight commanded his Lord Chamberlain, who stood close behind his chair, to ask of the knight his name and style, and why he approached in so extraordinary a way.

The knight made none other answer than by pointing with the same sword to the Baron de Blondeville. Then, the King guessing him to be that secret enemy of the Baron, who had appeared in the festal hall, and that he was in league with the prisoner; nay, suspecting he might possibly be that man his-self, escaped by his supposed potent arts, disguised also by them, and instigated with designs against the life of the Baron de Blondeville, promptly despatched a messenger to the

Lord Constable, with orders to secure the stranger; and he also privately sent one to know, whether the merchant was safe in his prison? and again bade his trumpets sound a summons for the Mareschal of the field!

For the merchant, King Henry might have spared his page the trouble, and himself have seen, with little pains, if he had leaned that way, the poor man's face through the grate of the turret-window, looking upon what was passing, in this place of now-disturbed pomp, and knowing less about it, than did his Highness, little as that was; and, for the Mareschal, he was now leaving the barrier and slowly advancing over the place of war, like one faint, and hardly able to support himself on his steed. Two knights of the barrier followed his steps, hardly less in dismay.

Meantime, the stranger-knight, having remained awhile, pointing with that sword

to the Baron de Blondeville, who, sitting on his courser, upheld his spear seemingly without power to launch it, if he had been so permitted, or to advance a single step,—the stranger knight, this having passed, withdrew a few paces: yet he fled not, because of the approach of the Mareschal and the Lord Constable, who gave orders that he should be seized; but stood in the place, to which he had slowly receded, with his lance couched and his shield lifted, as if he defied all attack.

No one of those, who heard the command, had approached him; whether they were withheld by fear, or by reverence; and, when the Lord Constable his-self indignantly rode forward, demanding why he thus unlawfully intruded upon the sports, and disturbed them, with intent to turn that, which was designed for recreation, into revengeful and malicious war," he received no answer; but saw the

stranger suddenly in a distant part of the field, in the same attitude of defiance.

Then was the King's anger changed into an ecstasy of amazement; and, turning to address himself to the Archbishop who was at his right hand, he beheld, in the solemn tranquillity of his countenance an image rather of death, than of life. It seemed to bear the reflexion of some awful truth! while his eyes were directed to some object, which so engrossed his attention, that he appeared to be insensible, not only of the King's words, but of his presence! His Highness, on then looking for that which caused such deep interest, beheld again the stranger-knight, on his charger, before the pavilion, with the sword again raised: where, as many say, appeared that word, "Justice!" in letters of blood, and now also the name of Gaston de Blondeville!

Then the knight's visor flew open, and

his Highness beheld the very countenance he had seen in the banquet-hall; that countenance looked upon the King more sternly than before; the eyes were not, as then, dim and melancholy, but seemed to shoot forth fire; and the stranger pointed again with his sword to the Baron de Blondeville, who wore one, that resembled it in the hilt, though not in the shape, and who now, after having sitten so long motionless on his charger, dropped his spear; he seemed to totter in his saddle, his head leaned aside, and, in the next moment, he swayed, and fell to the ground, a dead weight. The clash had drawn all eyes towards him, when his terrified steed, running wildly along the lists, conveyed to the distant spectators, some knowledge of the truth. His two esquires, and others who were near, hastened to his assistance, and a general consternation ensued.

The King, who had not observed his fall, and understood not rightly the occasion of it, seeing his fiery courser fleeing over the place of war, guessed he had taken fright, and thrown his master; meanwhile the Lord Mareschal had ridden forward to secure the stranger.

With confusion and almost palsying terror, the Queen and her ladies had witnessed the truth. Some swooned; others, who were the least overcome, endeavoured to convey away the Baroness de Blondeville, who had sunk down, and was senseless; others, on recovering from their first sensations, pressed forward to learn what might further happen; and others retreated, wishing to avoid all further view of so distressing a spectacle. Those farther off, on the castle-walls and windows, who beheld this uttermost turmoil and consternation, wished only for wings, that they might fly forward into the midst of

it; for the vexation they had suffered from their ill-satisfied curiosity and their imperfect view of those pageants and courtly imitations of war, was nothing in comparison to that caused by this glimpse of truth.

The fall of the Baron had been seen by the prisoner from his turret; and immediately he heard shrieks and the busy hum of mingled voices loud and deep: he saw the charger flee, and somewhat of the confusion in the King's pavilion; he observed the Lords Mareschal and Constable riding at full speed towards it, and that the armed knight, who had stood alone before the King, was no longer there, yet he had not observed, which way he had departed, nor his herald.

Now saw he his Highness rise up, and turn to leave the tent; while his esquires and pages raised the Baron on a kind of bier, and carried him from the field.

Then, the Queen and her ladies, supported by divers of the lords, departed as speedily as might be The Earl Mareschal continued to ride about the field; as did many of the knights, that those, who guarded it, might not think their duty at an end; a double guard was placed at the barriers, and all was hurry examination, and suspicion. His Highness, when he had understood the Baron's condition, conceiving that he had swooned in consequence of having seen and of having been viewed by that extraordinary personage, whose presence had before dismayed him, sent his physician to assist him; and commanded, that strict search should be made for the person who had caused such repeated consternation.

But, when he learned the whole truth, and that the Baron's life was irrecoverably lost, his grief and horror were unspeakable. He broke up the present field, and

with all his court, save such as were left to assist in guarding the barriers, while search for the stranger was going on within them, quitted the scene, and withdrew to his privy-chamber, with the Archbishop and a few of those whom chiefly he trusted.

That honest Prelate failed not, on this occasion, to give sincere and wholesome council; which, though his Highness little liked it, he was observed not to speak against, at first, save that he said his thought, that this was no mortal business, but a deed of sorcery; to which the Archbishop answered, he thought not this was an act of sorcery; it might be otherwise accounted for, when an innocent man was in so great peril, and justice was to be brought on a guilty one, against whom other means might not prevail, before judges unfortunately prejudiced in his favour.

At this so bold avowal of his opinion of the deceased Baron, whom now the King most sorely grieved for, and charge implied of injustice in himself, his Highness became angry, and answered sharply. The words of the Archbishop had fallen upon his wounded mind, as boiling oil upon a wounded body, exasperating it almost to madness. When he had departed, one craved admission, who better knew how to turn the passions of this Prince to his own account.

This was the Prior of Saint Mary's, who, having learned the fate of the unhappy Baron, came hither to provoke immediate vengeance on the poor prisoner, and to ensure, as he hoped, his own safety; and, for that purpose, he had recourse to his old subject of sorcery. And he seemed so deeply to sympathize with the King in grief for this sudden death of

the Baron, that his Highness listened to all he said, and was inclined to do whatsoever he entreated. The Prior urged, that, if speedily justice had been done upon the merchant, the Baron's life had probably been spared; and were justice long deferred, another innocent life, it were, not unlikely, might fall under his mischievous arts; nay, that the life of the King himself might be assailed. He reminded his Highness, that he had both urged and dreaded the probability of what had happened, when he supplicated, that his false accuser might be punished, without delay; nay, that the unfortunate Baron had his-self urged this, and, if his entreaty had been attended to, he had, in all likelihood, been now living.

On this, the sorrow of the King redoubled; he seemed to accuse himself as a cause of his favourite's death; and, before the Prior left the chambei, he had

promised to sign a warrant for the prisoner's death, bidding, that he should be told to prepare himself against the morrow. Then the Prior departed, grieving less for the Baron's fate, than rejoicing that his enemy would soon be destroyed.

On learning this fatal resolution of the King, the Archbishop again claimed hearing; for, he was of his Highness's council; and he tried by every argument to counteract the pernicious advice that had been given. He could now no longer conceal his suspicion of the Prior; and he entreated for a delay, at least, of the sentence, hoping that his messenger might, in the mean time, bring from Exeter some certain intelligence, on the subject of his suspicions. But the misled King, accusing himself bitterly for former delay, as the cause of the Baron's cruel end, and having been moreover prejudiced by the Baron, for his own purposes, with a notion of

some pretended cause of the Archbishop's dislike of the Prior, refused now to listen either to remonstrance, or to entreaty.

Sorrow and remorse, arising from a misapprehension of the truth, alone seemed to occupy the King, who now, with the intention, as he persuaded himself, of preventing further evil, was about to execute an act of injustice and stern cruelty. And thus it is, if kingly power pertain to a weak head, not carefully warned by early instructions against the dangers, which must beset all power, whether public or private, whether in Prince or subject; for, the passions are the helm, whereon designing men seize to steer into action, as they wish. And thus was pity now about to be made the instrument of cruelty.

Prince Edward, though young, saw this matter more clearly than did his father; and he entreated for the poor merchant;

nay, he even dared to express his opinion that he had used no unworthy arts. But the King was yet obdurate; and he bade the Prince remember that precious ring, which was to render him invincible in battle, how it had been conveyed away from his secured cabinet to his enemy Llwellyn of Wales, who had triumphed accordingly.

On this, the countenance of the Prince showed fiery red, and indignation sparkled in his eyes. "Give me an army," said the Prince, "that I may fight your enemies, and prove that ring to be not invincible." The King turned his eyes upon his noble son; and, for the ardour of his spirit, forgave him his importunity.

The Archbishop's brow relaxed, and his look dwelt long upon the Prince, with high benignity; while the young Prince cast down his eyes, which had met those of the Prelate, and he felt, that to deserve such

dignified approbation, he could encounter worse enemies, than he had spoken of.

The King now dismissed his suitors, even his son, and abandoned himself to grief and to ill-placed remorse. But what was grief, like his, compared with that of the distracted Baroness de Blondeville? who, innocent herself, had loved and honoured the Baron for such as her imagination painted him, not for what, in truth, he was. But what, had he lived, must she hereafter have known him for? She must have known him for the perpetrator of that lawless and wicked act, of which he was accused, and moreover for the cruel destroyer of domestic faith and happiness.

A tale was yet to tell, that would have abolished her peace for ever, and which that unknown and unhappy lady, who in the castle-hall challenged his shield and then departed, could have sadly related. The person of that lady was here a stranger,

but somewhat of her story had gone forth, and was partly understood by divers at the court, amongst others by Pierre, the Queen's minstrel, who, in her bower, had darkly told it on his harp, or wrapping and disguising truth with fiction. There the Baron de Blondeville had heard it, and he alone knew how to separate one from the other; he had heard it, and with such consternation, that he stayed not in the bower to inquire how Pierre drew the line between them.

On that same night, there had been also in the Queen's presence one distantly related to the most unhappy character in the minstrel's lay, and whom the guilty Baron then suspected of having prompted it. He burned to tell him so; but he dared not, since that would have brought to light a truth, which would have ruined and disgraced him, for ever. Whether this suspicion were just, or not, is uncertain; but

he bore deep rancour in his heart against that supposed suggester of the truth, and, on the first opportunity, determined to act, as if he had full proof that insult was intended.

And, this very day, he had done so, when, in the field of contest, he had encountered Sir Robert de Grendon, and had cunningly given him that dangerous wound, which had felled him to the ground. Those in the court, who knew the lady's mournful history and her relationship, though distant, to Sir Robert, questioned whether, even on his part, the encounter with the Baron was wholly accidental.

Nay, some suspected, that he had forborne to appear formally as her champion, only because he knew, that the King would then forbid the combat, and that he should be laid in jeopardy, like unto the poor merchant; wherefore, they said, he had concerted with his kinswoman her challenging of the Baron's shield. All this

well might be, but nothing certain was known on the subject, nor has it come to light, to this day. Sir Robert, however, was so sorely stricken by the Baron, that the King's physicians long thought his life in danger.

The poor lady, his kinswoman, pined and died hereafter of grief and remorse for her own former misconduct. With such a husband as the Baron de Blondeville, how then could his unfortunate wife have known happiness? But he died ere she knew him!

Woodreeve, who, from his prison-window, had seen the Baron fall from his charger, and had beheld him afterwards borne away from the field, knew not yet the whole truth; but this sudden reverse, appearing like a judgment on the crimes of his enemy, had filled the poor merchant with hope, yet with a kind of solemn astonishment,—a sort of tranquil awe,

which fixed him in earnest gaze at his grate, till all the multitude of the people round the grand plain, in gallery, tent, or on tree, on coursers, on hobbies, or on battlements, had dispersed and vanished away, like cloudy freckles before the morning breeze. And thus was this tournay so soon broken up, to the sad discomfiture of those who had come from distant parts, many a weary mile, to behold it. Many, who had been up with the dawn, and had endured hunger and uneasiness for hours—neither the King's castle, nor the villages round, having wherewithal to supply the wants of the vast multitudes here assembled—were now compelled to return home, with curiosity as little satisfied as their appetites, unable to tell the real conclusion of the festival. They did, however, carry with them a vague knowledge of a spectacle more marvellous than that they came

to behold; and widely did they spread it into distant towns and other shires; some to the heaths of Lincoln, some up the pleasant hills of Leicestershire, some to the forests of Nottingham, and some to the high regions of Derby.

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